The Christians Guid to Devotion.

Printed for H: Rodes near Bridelane in Fleetstreet

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THE Christians Guide: A TREATISE SHEWING The Grounds, Necessity, and End OF DEVOTION.

WITH RULES and DIRECTIONS for the leading an

Holy Life.

AS ALSO MEDITATIONS and PRAYERS Suitable to all Occasions.

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PART.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

What Devotion is, and wherein it conſiſts.

THIS is not a Subject to be defined according to Rules: It has leſs of the School than the Cloſet, and good ignorant Souls can inſtruct us better in it, than thoſe who have more Knowledge than Integrity. Yet the *Schools*, which buſie themſelves every where, undertake to *define* Devotion as well as other things. Some would define it by a tenderneſs of heart, and a mollified Spirit; Others by an internal Comfort, which the Devout are ſenſible of in their Practiſe of Piety: A third ſort ſay, 'tis a Quickneſs and Promptitude of Mind, whereby holy People are carried to the Service of God. Some there are, who make it to conſiſt in an unſpeakable and a glorious Joy, which fills the faithful, and makes them ſay, *My Soul is ſatisfied as with Marrow and Fatneſs.* Others have defin'd it by the Affections In the firſt place, to all this I ſay, That it may be a piece of Raſhneſs to go about to define a thing we know not how well to expreſs; ſince it is of the number of thoſe which cannot well be conceived, but by them who feel it, nor can well be deſcribed, although one conceives it. Nevertheleſs we

cannot define it by one word alone, nor by one motion of the Soul: for it is compoſed of all the *Species*'s of Paſſions; it admits of contrary Sentiments. It has Deſires, and it has Fears; Terrours and Hopes; Love and Hatred; Joy and Sadneſs; Ardour and Zeal; Quickneſs and Alacrity. It has Deſires; every Devout Soul vehemently deſiring to be well with God, and to be united to him. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God: When ſhall I come and appear before God?* It admits of Fear; for a good Soul is ever afraid of its unworthineſs to poſſeſs the Graces which it ſo paſſionately deſires; *I am not worthy*, ſayes it to our Lord Jeſus, *that thou ſhould'ſt come under my Roof.* If it be in poſſeſſion of its God, it fears to loſe him; it watches even in ſleep: *I ſleep, but my Heart waketh*: fearing, leſt ſomething ſhould raviſh away its Beloved.

Terrour alſo enters into the Compound of this Vertue; namely, when the Soul is fall'n into ſome great ſin, the preſence of its God aſtoniſhes it, and his Majeſty fills it with horrible Apprehenſions. And without this, the devout Soul never preſents it ſelf before God, but it remembers, that before him the Angels tremble, and it ſayes, *Oh! how terrible is this place; this is the Houſe of the living God.* Moreover, Love is to be found in it, and we may ſay, that Love is as the Source and Baſis of Devotion. In conſidering both the Beauty and Goodneſs of God, it is touch'd with a violent deſire of Union; It ſays with the Spouſe, *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his Mouth, for his Love is ſweeter than Wine.* There is alſo Hatred; for the devout Soul cannot love God, unleſs it renounce Self-love, and hate the World, the love of which is incompatible with that of God. There is Joy too, for Piety has its Feaſts, and the Wiſe man ſays, *the heart of a juſt*

a just man is a continual Banquet. Thou hast put, sayes David, *more Joy in my heart, than the wicked have of their abundance, My heart is glad, my Glory rejoyceth: my Flesh also shall rest in hope.* Yet we must confess, that this Light is not altogether pure: Devotion has its Melancholy amidst its Joyes, and frequently it sighs at the sense of its Infirmities.

The last ingredient of Devotion is Promptitude and Ardour, which is, as it were, the *Body* of Devotion, and appears more than the rest in a devout Soul. It has an inconceivable chearfulness in the exercises of Piety; it hears the Word; it Prays; it Reads; it Meditates; it communicates; as others do the most Pleasant things in the World. It runs, it flies to these actions, and undertaking 'em with a Gaiety of heart, does 'em with great ease. These are, methinks, the movements that compose Devotion; but we must observe, that in all People, they are not evermore in the same degree. Always some one of them does Reign: sometimes Joy bears sway, another while Grief; oftentimes Alacrity, other times the Desires. And hence it comes to pass, that if we consult the Devout upon the nature of Devotion, they will answer us very differently, because every one will say, that he feels within himself, and that every one feels within himself things very different from those of other men. It happens also, that one and the same Soul feels a different Devotion at divers times; the Motions, whereof we have spoken, ruling by Turns; To day a faithful Person shall be fill'd with hope in the view of a blessing to come, and to morrow with joy in the possession of the present good. One time by reason of his Sins, Sadness shall domineer; another time the Desires shall reign: and this alteration proceeds from the diversity of Estates, wherein the Conscience finds it self, and the variety of Prospects, which Meditations presents it withall, in considering God some

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times with reſpect had to his Love and Mercy, other times to his Severity and Juſtice. Frequently too he will eye his Conſcience both in its ſtrongeſt and in its weakeſt parts; and this may change ſome things in the Agitations of his Devotion. Chearfulneſs likewiſe, which ſeems to be the very Eſſence and Soul of this Virtue, is not inſeparable from it, and ſometimes the moſt heav'nly Souls find themſelves under a gloomy and ſad weight: But when this Briskneſs is abſent, its place is poſſeſt by a ſtinging Diſpleaſure for its Abſence.

Meditation.

ALas! my Soul, how ignorant art thou in things Divine! *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs to him.* Theſe are profound *Abyſſes*, which thou canſt not ſound: Thy light is nothing but darkneſs: But yet aſtoniſhing it is not, that thou knoweſt not heavenly things, which God has reſerv'd to himſelf, and lockt up in his own Breaſt. 'Tis more ſtrange, thou knoweſt not what God does in this, and art ignorant of thoſe Divine things, which are in thy Heart. Vain and haughty, as thou art, with the advantages which Nature has given thee above the viſible Creatures, thou ſaieſt, thou art an incarnate Angel; ſay rather, that thou art an Angel impriſoned in a dark and diſmal manſion, who knoweſt

knowest but in part, and see'st but in part, obscurely, and as in a Glass, through the thick veil of Flesh and Blood.

Prayer.

O *My God, thou Father of Lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, open mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy Law. I am a Stranger upon Earth, and a Sojourner: Oh! hide not from me thy Commandments. I am inquiring into the Nature of Devotion: I shall not be able to know it without thee. In vain shall I search for it in the works of another, unless I find it in mine own Heart. I do not find what I seek for there, where then shall I find it? Even in thee my God, who art the Source of what I look for. Raise therefore in my Heart those flames of Zeal and Piety, that being filled therewith my Soul may not need but to study it self to attain this knowledge, and after the attainment may be able to love it, and make others do so too. Let it sparkle and shine in all my Words and Actions like a Torch that lights my Neighbours, and let it kindle in them the holy flames of Devotion.*

CHAP. II.

Of the Effects of Devotion.

IN ſpeaking of the nature of Devotion in the precedent Chapter, we inſinuated all its Effects: but it will not be amiſs nor unprofitable to unfold them a little more: for, theſe Effects, well underſtood, will lead us to the knowledge of the Cauſe, and ſerve us for a Touch-ſtone, whereby pious Souls may try both the purity and the progreſs of their Devotion.

The firſt of theſe effects is a vehement Paſſion, to converſe with God and pour forth our grief into his Boſom; to hear his Word, and to receive the Gages of his Love in his Sacraments. You ſee this Diſpoſition in *David*, who ſighs after the Houſe of God, and finds nothing in his Exile more inſupportable than his Baniſhment from the Court of the Lord's Houſe. Jealous he is of the Condition of the Swallows, that build their Neſts there. He would be a Door-keeper in this houſe, and never ſtir from thence; *My Soul hath a deſire to enter into thy Courts*, ſays he: *I have asked one thing of the Lord, that I may dwell in his houſe all the days of my life.* He avows, that the hopes of ſeeing God again in his houſe do ſuſtain him, and keep him from falling into Deſpair: *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the Goodneſs of the Lord in the Land of the Living.* The faithful Soul has no leſs Paſſion for the Solitude of its Cloſet than *David* had for the Temple of his God; It looks upon thoſe hours as loſt which 'tis obliged to throw away upon the World; and as ſoon as it can withdraw it ſelf from the hurry and buſtle of Affairs, it runs to the Boſom of its God, as the Hart to the Water-brooks; as a covetous Perſon to the ſearch of Riches;

Riches; as a Courtier watches for the Hour and Place to ſee his Prince and to be ſeen, and receive from him conſiderable Favours.

A ſecond Effect is a Joy, which we may call inconceivable, when the Devout in their Devotions feel their Heart diſplay'd, and the Holy Ghoſt appears with all the Riches of his Grace, and all the Treaſures of his Conſolations. If any one ſhould inquire of ſuch a Soul why it is ſo ſatisfied, perhaps it would be an hard matter for it to tell him: but the true cauſe of this Joy is, That God does exert in it his comfortable and wholſom Rays, which are ever accompanied with a plenary Happineſs. The Pleaſure which an avaricious man takes in counting his Money, which the ambitious taſte in hoping for new Grandeurs, which the *Epicurean* finds in his Feaſts and Debauches; all this, I ſay, is unſavoury and of a bad taſte in compariſon of that Joy which the pious Soul perceives in communicating with its God. This is an Ocean which overwhelms and drowns all the Perplexities and Troubles of the Fleſh. The Perſecuted find here their Sanctuary; the Poor, Riches; the Sick-man, Health; the Contemptible, Glory; the Humble, Grandeur; and the Miſerable, a general Oblivion of all his Calamities. This is that wherein a Soul, tired with the World, finds that heavenly Repoſe, which makes it with Indignation, and yet with Pity, look upon the cruel Agitations of worldly men, that are tied to the racking Wheels and Stones of *Ixions* and *Siſyphus's*, that is to ſay, to Labours, that always return and never have an end.

Hence ſprings another effect of Devotion; namely, To forget this World. When the Devout Perſon ſhuts the door of his Cloſet, we may ſay, he ſhuts the door to the World, ſaying to himſelf, Get ye gone ye worldly Thoughts; retire ye Objects of Vanity, and

approach not near this place; let me rejoyce in the quiet of this ſecure Sanctuary, and ſuffer me to give my ſelf wholly up to my God. The pious Soul after this manner dies many times a day: for Death does not more efface the Images of worldly things, than Devotion, when it takes a Chriſtian out of the World. This Soul may ſay at ſuch a time, *The World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World: I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the Life which I now live in the Fleſh I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himſelf for me.* We need not wonder if the World quits the place in this moment, ſince I ſuppoſe, that it before took up but very little Room in the Soul, whereof I ſpeak. God comes to poſſeſs it wholly, of which he had before the better; for the devout Heart ventures to ſay, The whole is in God, and God is in every part. In this ſtate, if by peradventure it caſts its Eyes upon the World, it looks down from on high, and with an Eye of Contempt. Alas! What are theſe ſame Riches, ſays the faithful Soul, theſe Honours and Advantages, which frequently terminate in eternal Death, to compare with the Riches that God here beſtows upon me? But near to God himſelf, whom I poſſeſs, theſe earthly Goods will vaniſh and be loſt; but I will never loſe him who holds me and whom I hold: and Death, which will diſrobe the Living of their Pomp, will inveſt me with new Glory.

The fourth Effect of Devotion is, an Alacrity in running, and advancing in the Practiſe of Piety. A General flies to the Combat when he ſees an aſſured Victory: but the devout Perſon has other kind of wings, which make him fly whither Devotion conducts him. He knows not, that 'tis the drooping and weight of the Body that retains them who are call'd to *Travel*: he has not the Sentiments of the Sluggard, who rouls upon

on his Bed as a Gate upon its Hinges, who fights Battles with his Boulſter, and wages Wars with Sleep and Idleneſs, with a Deſign to be vanquiſhed. He is one of thoſe Eagles, of which ſome think our Saviour ſpoke, *Where the dead Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.* He knows that he ſhall find his *Jeſus*, once dead, but now alive, either in the Church or in his Cloſet: he flies thither with the Swiftneſs of an hungry Eagle; nothing is capable of ſtopping him; Friends, Enemies, Employs, Occupations, Prayers, Menaces, Fears and Dangers, all uſeleſs: for in poſting he can ſurmount all Obſtacles in the way.

Another Effect of Devotion is, a certain Elevation of Soul, which I cannot term otherwiſe than a ſort of Extaſie, whereby the Soul is as it were, raviſh'd from its ſelf. 'Tis ſo knit to the Contemplation of Cœleſtial Objects, that not only it has no more intelligence of earthly things, but it has no Senſe, no Ears, no Eyes; it ſees not, it underſtands not. St. *Peter*, while he prayed, ſaw the Heavens opened, and a certain Veſſel deſcending to the Earth, as it had been a great ſheet knit at the four Corners. St. *Paul* in Prayer was raviſhed even to the third Heaven; and the Devout even at this time of day have their Extaſie. They ſee with *Stephen* the Heavens opened; they are lifted up to Heaven with St. *Paul*; for they enter into a ſecret Commerce with God. The Soul inwardly is ſo taken up, that it ſees nothing at all of what paſſes without; and contributing its whole force to the Contemplation of God, no Wonder, it has no more for other Objects. *Bleſſed are they*, ſays St. Baſil, *who are fill'd with, and infolded in the Contemplation of this true Beauty; ſince being bound to it by the Cords of Charity, and of an heavenly and divine Love, they forget their Parents, Friends, Houſes; they forget even the neceſſity of eating and drinking.* And now why ſhould it not be ſo in the

Offices of Piety, when ev'ry day this happens to us in the Affairs of the World? While we are ſtrongly fixt to Reading, to diſintangle a crabbed and knotty matter, while we anſwer an Adverſary, a thouſand Objects paſs before our eyes, whereof we do not take notice. The devout Soul is ſo ſhut into it ſelf, ſo well gathered up and compacted, that no external thing is able to move it. If it prays, it is intirely in Heaven; if it hears, it is wholly tyed up to the Tongue of him that ſpeaks; if it reads, its heart is always where the eyes terminate themſelves; if it meditates, it is all over plunged in it's ſubject; and if a Flock of *Birds*, of vain and light Thoughts, come to ſoil its Sacrifice, as that of *Abraham*, it ſcares them away incontinently. This is that which I underſtand by the *Extaſie* of Devotion: otherwiſe, if you take this term for effectual Raviſhments, which were the Priviledges of the Prophets and Saints of the firſt Order, I muſt take an infinite deal of pains to believe that the *Holineſſes* of the *Roman* Cloyſter do oblige God (as ſome would fain perſwade us) ſo ordinarily to communicate ſuch extraordinary Graces. Now a days we do not ſee thoſe Devotions, which lift up not only the Souls, but make the Body to loſe its Earth, and raiſe it to the very Clouds: Nevertheleſs, if we would believe ſome, who call themſelves good Authors, there is nothing more common.

The laſt Effect of Devotion that I ſhall mention, is, a certain Fire that warms the Heart. One cannot well conceive it unleſs one had felt it; and I cannot expreſs it otherwiſe than in the words of holy men: *Did not our Heart burn within us while he talked with us, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? My Heart was hot within me; while I was meditating, the Fire burned; then ſpake I with my Tongue.* We are told, how the Faces of the Saints have been oftentimes ſeen to be bright and

and inflamed in the midſt of their Devotions, which could not proceed but from the glowing and fiery affection of the Heart, which manifeſts it ſelf accordingly in the Countenance. This Fire we may call a Fermentation of the Spirits of Piety, which not ſeldom make Impreſſions even in the eyes. And hence, it may be, came the ſhining of St. *Stephen*'s Face; of which it is ſaid, that his Enemies ſaw it as if it had been the Face of an Angel; his *Zeal* and his Devotion were evident in his Eyes, and render'd 'em ſparkling. Now this Lightning is not without its Rain; I mean, that this Fire is ordinarily accompanied with Tears. The Heart is heated, blows up that Heat, makes it grow bigger; then it ſelf grows tender, and at laſt the Eyes melt into Tears. St. *Auſtin* repreſents himſelf in one of theſe Illuminations, or rather, Inflamations of Heart. *After*, ſays he, *that a ſtrong Meditation had drawn out all my Miſery from the bottom, where it lay hid, to preſent it to the Eyes of my Heart, there aroſe a great Tempeſt, which was followed by a great Shower of Tears.* This weeping does not always come from a Senſe of Sin; 'tis ſometimes cauſed by a jarring diverſity of Thoughts, and a confuſion of good Emotions, which caſt the Soul into a ſort of Diſorder, but which is much better than the greateſt Calm.

Meditation.

HOW were it to be wiſht, that men were as holy, as they are Eloquent and knowing? pourtraicts they make, but where ſhall we find the Originals? I ſee plainly, that the characters of true De-

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votion are curious and raviſhing: but, alas! the more I enter into this Meditation, the more do I continue confus'd. When I conſider what I ought to be, to be devout, and I examin what I my ſelf am, I find that I am nothing, or that I am not juſt what I ſhould be, I do not find in my ſelf thoſe ardent deſires to be with my God, and to converſe with him by holy Prayer and Meditation. My Soul languiſhes, but it is not after the houſe of my God, nor after the ſolitude of my *Cabinet*. It languiſhes, for it is feeble and weak in all the motions of Piety. I do violence to my own heart, in drawing it out of the clutches of the World, to put it into the hands of God. I enter into my Cloſet, to do my Exerciſes of Piety, rather to acquit my ſelf of a Duty, which I have impoſed on my ſelf, than to follow my own inclinations. Where is that Joy, which I ought to taſte in the Acts of my Devotion? Where is that being unbound from the World, renouncing of all carnal thoughts? where is that Fervour and Alacrity, the Extaſies, the Flames, the Illuminations of that heavenly fire, whereof I am a reading the deſcription? All is dead

in

in me: If I would quit the World to enter into my Closet, I carry it still along with me. In all the faculties of my Soul I feel a monstrous weight and dulness, which arrests all my Elevations, and makes me tumble down back again to the Earth; my Jertings up are feeble and of a short Durance, they hardly go half Way to Heaven.

Prayer.

HAve pity on my sad Estate, my Father, and my God: Draw me, and I will run after thee. *Why should I remain in the shadow of Death? Thou Sun of righteousness, that carriest healing in thy Wings, raise me up and quicken me: Let the East from on high visit me with the Bowels of his Mercy. Let my heart burn within me, whilst I read thy Scriptures, and hear thy Word: Let my Prayers be ardent, and my Piety constantly sustained by the force and flames of thy Grace and loving kindness. And thou, my Soul, do not attend this loving kindness with Arms across: go meet it, call and say,* Come Lord *Jesus*, come quickly, O God of my Salvation, *awaken my heart*. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall

ſhall give thee Life. *Chaſe away ſloath, let it no longer lye in the bed of ſecurity: baniſh all coldneſs: rid thy ſelf of that burthenſome weight that oppreſſes thee: Take the Wings of an Eagle, and to Heaven fly into the boſom of thy Saviour, and thou ſhalt find Sweets which thou haſt never yet taſted never ſeen, never heard of, and which never enter'd into thy Imagination to conceive.*

CHAP. III.

The great neceſſity of Devotion.

WHO can doubt on't, and is it not ſufficient barely to know and to deſcribe it, to perſwade us to it? Devotion is the Soul of the Soul, and the very Life of Piety. 'Tis that which ſets a price and value upon the Duties and the Worſhip of a faithful Soul. A due Preparation is neceſſary to every thing. An Orator who is to ſpeak in publick firſt amaſſes his matter together, and then aſſays to put it into a good Form: A Souldier being to fight, prepares his Army, and rouzes his courage. He that goes to a Marriage, puts on a Wedding Garment: And why then do we take upon us to preſent our ſelves before God in Prayer, in reading, or in hearing his Word, in imploring his Aſſiſtance, or rendring him Actions of Gratitude, without having the holy diſpoſition of Piety and Devotion, that are before him of ſo great Price?

We do ever that thing well, which we do heartily: but

but when the Heart is no Party in the buſineſs, it avails nothing. The Souldier who carries not his Heart along with him, turns his back in the day of battle: and the Orator, whoſe Heart is not toucht with what he ſays, will never touch that of others. If without the Heart we cannot perform the works of the Tongue and of the Hand, how ſhall the work of the heart it ſelf be done without the Heart? This is what I call the Exerciſes of Piety and the Service of God. A Lute, can it be plaid upon, unleſs it be ſtring'd and tun'd? can a Bow ſhoot unleſs it be bent? the Heart is an *Inſtrument* and a Lute, the ſound whereof charms the Ears of the Almighty; but it muſt be ſtrung with all its Vertues as with ſtrings, and Devotion muſt be to it a kind of Soul, that makes every thing elſe to act. Prayer is an Arrow, that flies to the Heav'ns, but Devotion only gives it both ſtrength and Feathers. Prayer is a Sacrifice and an offering of the Heart. We muſt not therefore preſent common Riches to God without preparation and choice; and the *Paſſover*-Lamb was ſeparated from the Flock four days before its Immolation.

Let not the Sinner then offer to God dirty and foyl'd Prayers, but pure and devout ones; let him ſeparate his heart from the vanities of the World and the Folly of his vain thoughts, if he will be well-pleaſing to God.

Without Devotion the Soul is dead, the heart is but in its Body as in its Grave; What raſhneſs then to lay a dead and corrupted Beaſt upon the Altars of God? will not God ſay; *I hate your Oblations, the Peace-Offerings of your fat Beaſts, and the perfume of your Incenſe; I cannot away with them.* Devotion is a Fire, without which our Sacrifices could not be conſumed. It's a Fire coming down from Heav'n; it's an emanation of the Rays of the Sun of Righteouſneſs; its what muſt lift

liſt up the Smoak of our incenſe to Heav'n. Aſſur thy ſelf, thou Chriſtian Soul, that thy offerings are i the right way, and that the Flames of Devotion are a lone capable of piercing thoſe Clouds thickned by In quity, that ſeparate us from God. The matter tha makes thunder-bolts ſo maſſy and heavy, would no alwayes be mounted in the middle Region of th Air, from whence we ſee 'em hurl'd down upon th Earth, were it not carried upon the Wings o ſome inflamed Exalations. In like manner ou Earthly Prayers as well as our hearts woud no be able to mount the Skies, did not the flames of De votion lift them up. So that we ought to put ou heart into a good condition to hope a good ſucceſs o its worſhip. Tho never ſo much prepared, it canno be too good for him to whom we ought to preſent it It will be an acceptable thing to be receiv'd in thi Eſtate. And what on the contrary can we expect in preſenting to him an indevout Soul, but a ſhameful an ſad refuſal? God does not hear our prayers, unleſs the Heart be diſpoſed to make them; *Seek and ye ſhall find* ſaith our Lord; but ſeek with zeal, otherwiſe ye ſhall not find. God ſaid once, *I was found of them that ſought me not.* But this does not happen every day: this is but one of thoſe ſingular events, whereby general Rules are not eſtabliſhed. But the Law in common bears, *Ask and it ſhall be given. Lay hold on the King dom of Heaven and thou ſhalt obtain it.* To what is not Devotion uſeful? It is of uſe in all Places, all times and all things as well in the Cloſet as the Church? there by we hear the Word pronounced by men as if it were truly the word of God, and receive it as the dry and chapped Earth does the rain. Hereby the Con ſecration of the Divine benefits touches us, the thought of God's love inflames us, his promiſes comfort us, his threatnings terrifie us, and his Conſolations have their

Effi-

Efficacy upon us. Without this, the word, which ought to be a two-edged Sword, recoyls and turns its edge on the hardneſs of our hearts; and without this we joyn the Sin of Inſenſibility to that of Impenitence. By this we look upon every thing in the Church with veneration; the Preacher as the Embaſſador of the Goſpel; his Word as the voice of Heaven; The Faithful as the Children of God, and as it were a Troop of Angels, that always rejoyce in his preſence; the Sacraments as precious veſſels, the appearance whereof is contemptible, but which do contain the Treaſures of his Grace and Mercy. It's Devotion that makes our Cloſets to become little Churches, whether the Divinity deſcends, and upon which it extends its Wings like the Cherubims over the Mercy-ſeat; where God ſpeaks to our heart as we ſpeak to his ears; where he makes us underſtand his Oracles, and taſte his Conſolations; where he ſays to us in a ſtill ſmall voice, My Son or my Daughter, *Be of good chear, ariſe, thy Sins are forgiven thee.* Oh! how bleſſed is the faithful Soul, that God honours with ſuch ſacred Entertainments. Now he does never do this, but when call'd upon, if not forced by an ardent Devotion. Theſe deſires of Devotion may be the Eyes of the Spouſe, whereof it is ſaid, *Turn away thine Eyes from me, for they have overcome me.* Far be from hence thoſe prophane Wretches, that know not the uſe of Devotion. They ſay, that Valour is the Rampart of Eſtates, and the Tutelary Angel of the Publick and of *Privates*; that Liberality ſweetens the misfortunes of the miſerable; that Juſtice is the nurſe of Peace and the ligament of Society; that Temperance cauſes tranquillity of mind, and health of Body; But ſay they, Devotion, 'tis alone, that is good for nothing but to render the mind weak and effeminate, and to depreſs the Spirits. Do not call ſo univerſal a Vertue un-

unprofitable, without which all the reſt are meer ſhadows: for he, that having not a habit of Devotion, doe not refer all his vertues to the Glory of God, is a bad good man. Do not call that an uſeleſs Virtue which appeaſes the wrath of God, and turns away the Temꝑeſts flying over States; a Virtue which had drawn *Sodom* out of the Fire, had there been found there but ten devout Perſons like *Abraham*, who would have *Devoutly* with him interceded for it; a Virtue, which ſaves the Church ſo often from ſhip-wrack; a Virtue which in the Conſcience raiſes up and eſtabliſhes a profound Peace and a Divine Light. Do not ſay that it ſofrens the Mind; ſeeing it confirms the Courage, makes men run to death as to a Feaſt, makes 'em to deſpiſe Perils, and in its occaſions mannages nothing wherein the Glory of God is not concerned.

Meditation.

SEE one of the cauſes of my luke-warmneſs, and one of the reaſons, why my Soul is little devout. The neceſſity of Devotion it comprehends not; whereas it knows, that Food is neceſſary for the conſervation of its bodily Life. It deſires nouriſhment with a great ardour, and ſearches after it with a marvellous diligence. But negligent it is in all thoſe things which ſerve to nouriſh Piety and the flames of Devotion, ſince it does not beleive, that 'tis of any great uſe. Thou ſee'ſt, O my Soul, ſome, who ſave themſelves with a lan-

anguiſhing Piety, and go to Heaven at a very ſlow pace; Thou perſuadeſt thy ſelf that God will not be more rigorous to thee, and that there will not be more exacted from thee than from others: But alas! what an errour and fallacy is there in this reaſoning? Such an one, as thou believeſt to be in the way to Heaven, is a marching towards Hell. There is ſuch a way, that ſeems right to man, the end of which nevertheleſs is Death. Theſe chill Devotions, wherewith People believe God is well paid, are oftentimes very fruitleſs. They may think it fine one day to ſay, we have prayed to thee, we have invok'd thy Name, we have ſerved thee; The Lord will not fail to anſwer, I do not know who ye are, go far from me, ye that are neither cold nor hot; I will caſt you up out of my mouth.

Prayer.

MY God, conduct my Soul in the ſureſt path. I know not how to ſound thy Mercy, nor do I know how far the ſeverity of thy Juſtice will carry it ſelf and no further. I know not whether thou wilt pardon ſo many People, that ſerve thee with ſo little Zeal and

and ſo much indevotion. That which I kno is, that they are unworthy of thy clemency, a that they cannot be ſaved unleſs they ſincer ly repent of having ſerved thee with ſo muc indifference. Let the Candle of my Soul, t holy Spirit, which has inlightened thy Churc in all ages, and the faithful at all times, i ſpire me with ſuch frankincenſe of Devotio as with which I know that one may be ſave and without which I know not, if one ca be ſaved; Kindle my heart that it may b an Altar, where an eternal Fire may bur in which all my ſacrifices may be conſume and which may make all my prayers as th Perfumes of incenſe to mount up in thy Pr ſence.

CHAP. IV.

That Devotion is extremely rare, and neglected.

HERE is an Exception to the general Ru that things rare are eſteemed: nothing the World more rare than Devotion, a nothing more neglected. Herein men d not ſin through Ignorance; they know very well, wh we have ſaid in the precedent Chapter, that wit out theſe devout diſpoſitions or Prayers they cann pleaſe God. Nevertheleſs one cannot Expreſs the ho rible negligence with which they perform this pio Duty as well as all others. People come to theſe exer

ſes with a prodigious ſloath: 'tis viſible, that Cuſtom trains us to 'em, when our inclinations carry us another way. 'Tis the fear of the ſcourge and the Batton which makes Slaves to go: for we go thither as to a Task and a laborious work. What we do with regret, as little we make it as poſſible: whereupon we rob the World of one quarter of an hour in the day to beſtow upon God. after which we believe all is well enough, and that God may very well ſpare us the reſt. We go about this work, as if it were a burthen to us; we make haſte with it, that it may be ſoon over; and when we are arrived to a Period, it looks, as if a mighty Load were taken off of our ſhoulders. Judge then, if one can do well, what one does in this wiſe. We think not of what we are a going to do, nor of what we do. We ought to daunt and amaze our ſelves in conſidering the Majeſty, before whoſe eyes we go to appear; and we come thither in ſuch an heedleſs manner, as if we went to the meaneſt of Mankind. Are we got up the Mountain? our heart is ſtill in *Sodom*: We wander through the Univerſe, and ſtretch our uncertain Gaddings of thought even to the *Imaginary Spaces*: our imagination is fill'd with *Croteſques* and Fantoms. The moſt part roul their Prayers upon their Tongues in a Torrent of words, neither the Heart nor the Imagination having any thing to do there: And ſo ſmall an Impreſſion is made upon the heart, that nothing appears a moment afterwards. In going from the Exerciſes of Devotion, every one ought to examin himſelf, to know, whether his faith, his charity, his hope, have received conſiderable augmentations; but he thinks of nothing leſs: every one running whither Intereſt or pleaſure calls him, leaving his Conſcience without examination.

Queſtionleſs, the greateſt part, after their Prayers, may find their Conſcience in a worſe eſtate than before; ſo that this Examination being ſo far from producing

ducing Peace to 'em, would increaſe their Inquietu
If their Prayers be indevout, their other Exerci
are they leſs ſo? If in hearing the word of God th
lend ſome attention, 'tis not to the things themſelv
but to the manner wherein they are ſpoken. If t
Preacher has not the Talent and Knack of pleaſing, th
don't hear him, he does not Edifie, *ſay they*, he can't ke
one awake: and after this a piece it is of good Conſ
ence to be able to ſleep at Sermon: Inſomuch as he ſpe
to Deaf People, and our Churches, from whence
have baniſht Images, ceaſe not to be Temples of Ido
which have Eyes and Ears, and yet neither ſee n
hear. The Preacher ſeems to have in his ha
the head of *Meduſa*; when he appears, every thing
turned into Marble: and the word of God is a Char
that makes Stones of the Children of *Abraham*, inſte
of making the Children of *Abraham* of Stones.
good part of thoſe that hear, do only retain wh
they judge may afford fit matter to their Cenſures a
their profane Ralleries. They paſs by an excelle
thing, and pick out a bad word: That is to ſay, i
field covered over with Riches they gather a Thorn
a Flint, and let the Flowers and the Fruits alo
They that are leſs guilty, hear and would make a go
uſe of what they underſtand; but their Will is ve
imperfect, and is not of a very long duration; ſince
ceaſes almoſt as ſoon as the Preacher ceaſes to ſpe
What Indevotion and what coldneſs have we not in
partaking of the Lords Supper; in which venerable S
crament God gives us his fleſh to eat and his Blood
drink? our Piety is not now divided into a crowd
Worſhips and Services, as it was under the Law: all
reduced to a few Ceremonies, and for the Adult b
one Sacrament. In ſuch a caſe therefore we oug
to rendezvouz all our Devotion, and give to this o
pledge of God's Love all the zeal and ardour, which t

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Iſraelites were obliged to have for thoſe many and different Ceremonies, the Law commanded. The Flame that is ſcattered, burns very little: the Sun-beams quartered into ſeveral places have ſmall effects; but being aſſembled and contracted in the center of a Burning-Glaſs, they kindle Wood and melt Metals. It woud be the ſame if our Devotion did re-unite it ſelf in this Divine Object: it would conſume all our Vanities, and melt the Ice of our Souls. If we were devout in the participation of this holy Sacrament, our faith would pierce the Appearance and the deſpicable outſide to contemplate the Fleſh within of the Son of God, and all the Miracles of our Salvation. But we ſtick at the Bark; we come thither as to a common Repaſt; we bring with us our Indevotion, and carry away along with us for a wretched Companion our Damnation.

What we ſee in publick is a ſhrewd and an evident ſignification of what we do not ſee; and 'tis a difficult matter to judge charitably of the Devotions of the Cloſet, ſince we have ſo little reaſon to be content with thoſe in the Church; if People do ſomewhat for Glory, and for the Pleaſure of being approved, when they will releaſe themſelves of that Trouble, at their having no Witneſſes. Let none then accuſe us of violating the Rights of Retreat and Secrecy, if we ſay, that private Devotions are yet more drowſie and reſtleſs; as he who ſleeps at Sermon will hardly keep awake at reading a ſingle Chapter upon words abandoned of ſound and voice, which oppoſe themſelves to ſleep. Every one hath his Voice in this World, and every Condition has its Fauls; the Merchant is covetous, and oftentimes deceitful, for his Intereſt; the Courtier is ambitious; the Magiſtrate corruptible; the poor man impatient; the Rich haughty; but Indevotion is the Crime of all men in general. We will not ſay of *All*, if you pleaſe, but will confeſs,

there

there are ſome good Souls, who groan to themſelv
expand their Hearts before God with much Zeal, a
make ſuch Sabbaths their Delights. But how few a
theſe Examples! Perhaps it would be a hard buſin
to find ten ſuch righteous Perſons in *Sodom*: a
ſince that Exceptions do not deſtroy general Rul
this will not hinder us from complaining of our A
as of an Age of *Iron*, ſo cold, the like is not to
found in *Geeen-land.*

Meditation.

I Am not call'd to examine others: I ſ
very well, that Devotion is a thing v
ry ſcarce in the World. This ought i
finitely to afflict me by reaſon of the pa
I take in the Intereſts of my God. Th
ought to make me afraid, leſt the Wor
ſhould become a *Sodom*, and be made lik
unto *Gomorrah*, and leſt God ſhould tum
ble down upon it the Effects of his Ve
geance, and his Deluges of Fire and Brim
ſtone. But loe a thing that touches m
much nearer: 'tis the ſeldomneſs of devo
motions in my Heart. This unhapp
Heart of mine is made, I think, of Ma
ble and Ice. How is't poſſible it ſhou
continue inſenſible amidſt ſo many O
jects which are capable to move it? Ho
can it be ungrateful when it is inviron
with ſo many Favours from Heaven? Ho

is it poſſible it ſhould not tremble before him, whoſe Preſence makes the Angels to tremble? Why does not my Soul, that is changed and deſtitute of all Good, run with ardour to a Source ſo pure and ſo refreſhing? One Tear I cannot draw from my Eyes, nor one Sigh from my Heart. Every day I preſent my ſelf before my God with dry Eyes, with an humble Body, but with a proud Soul, and frequently with ſo great an Air of Negligence, that the Tone of my Voice, the Poſture of my Members, and generally all that is ſeen and heard in me, ſpeaks my Indevotion. When have I inſulted over my own Heart? how often have I ſaid to my ſelf, thou wicked Soul, why doſt thou not quake and ſhiver within me? why doſt thou not fear him, whom none can fear enough? and why doſt thou not love him infinitely, who has infinitely loved thee? If thou lov'dſt and fear'dſt this God as thou oughteſt, this God ſoveraignly adorable, whom the Angels love and fear, thou cou'dſt not be cold in his Service, nor adore him in ſo languiſhing a manner.

Prayer.

ALas, my God! thou seest how I groan un der the burthen of my Corruption an of my Indevotion. Help me then to rid my se of 'em, so that those motions of Piety and Ze which thou lovest so much, may henceforth b as frequent in my Soul as they have been rar ly till this present: that the movements of m Devotion may not resemble those Sparks, whic flye up from a great company of Embers, an then grow cold and are extinguished; but be those pure flames, which burn perpetuall even in the midst of Water, and resist the Storm and Tempests of Temptation, Corruption, an bad Examples. And that being far fro suffering my self to be carried away by th Torrent of Corruption and Indevotion, whic obtains even in the Sanctuary, I may can my Righteousness to shine like a Candle i the midst of Darkness.

CHAP. V.

That Indevotion is a far greater crime tha it is commonly thought.

TOuching the indevotion of the Profane, I do n speak, but of those that would be called th children of God. I speak of all those neglects an col

coldneſſes, of all thoſe diſtractions, and vain and carnal thoughts, which traverſe the excerciſes of Piety. The principal reaſon of the commonneſs of this crime is, the opinion which people have, that it is a very ſmall fault. There is nothing which they do not ſay and imagine to flatter themſelves in this Vice. One ſays 'tis the nature of the Soul to be active and boyling; we cannot fix it upon one only object; it takes fire and evaporates, even when we believe we can hold it: It is, ſay they, a Malady of the Soul, of which it ſelf is not culpable. Ah! certainly, if it were an evil intirely unvoluntary, it would very well deſerve we ſhould deplore the miſery of the Soul. 'Tis a ſign of a ſtrange Irregularity, and a proof that Sin is cauſed within by great diſorders. If you ſee a man in the midſt of a diſcourſe of good ſenſe wander all on a ſudden and ſpeak a thouſand impertinences and extravagant things, will not you ſay, he has a *Deſultory* wit, and an ill-biaſs'd Spirit? Is it not a proof of a great Diſorder in the heart, to perceive ones ſelf in the midſt of ones devout thoughts to evaporate, to go and take a leap from ones ſelf and the Subject, to fall into a thouſand *Chimerical* imaginations? But further, I ſay, there is as much of a crime as of miſery in this Evil. It's ſufficient to know that Sin is the cauſe of this diſorder, to be aſſured there is ſin in it. The Product of a criminal cauſe cannot be Innocent: and I fancy that the inferiour part of the Soul being corrupted by Sin is like to marriſh and fenny places, from whence Vapours are continually elevated to Heaven, which oftentimes obſcures the Sun. Our paſſions, 'tis true, do raiſe up the Clouds of vain and evil thoughts, that rob our hearts of the Suns ſight: but what of this? does it not follow, that this is not a great evil? do not all crimes come from this Source, and are they therefore the leſs to be condemned?

We imagine that the mind of man cannot be fix which is falſe, and a thouſand Experiments can ſhe us the contrary. Were you to appear before a gre Prince to defend your Life, you would think ſo eage ly and earneſtly upon the buſineſs, that no other thi would be allowed admittance into the thoughts: in ſpea ing to him you wou'd not ſuffer the leaſt Diſtraction. T Niggard that counts his Treaſures, does not hear wh any one comes to knock at the Door of his *Cabinet*. A m that is upon an important Affair, and gives up h mind to it, never finds theſe wandrings of Imag nation. It's true then, that it is poſſible to hinder th Levity of mind, whereof we complain, as of an i curable evil. Thus in the vice of Indevotion there a ſort of Pride of being unwilling to humble our ſelv worthily before God, in whoſe preſence all Natu trembles. I would fain know, whether a King would ta it well, that in doing him Reverence one ſhould tu his back upon him, or that one ſhould do him Homa with an air of diſdain: and this is what we do God. We give him not the very Moity of our hea To ſlight and deſpiſe him, whom the Angels ador can it be call'd a Peccadillo? *The Lord reigneth, the Earth be moved*, are very rare words in our mou And ſeeing that God does not immediately aven himſelf on the great contemners of his Majeſty, witho fear we take up an habit of defying him. Unqueſtiona if there were nothing elſe in Indevotion beſides t crime of Diſobedience, 'twould be enough to render worthy of all the moſt ſevere puniſhments. We kn mighty well that God commands us Ardour and Ze and we cannot be ignorant, how he calls us, to ta the Kingdom of Heaven by Violence. We hear ſaid every day, that he caſts up the Luke-warm o of his mouth. We read every where, that the w of the Faithful ought to be in a ſwift *Courſe*, and no

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ſlow walk. And in ſhort, we know very well, that he would have us be eaten up with the Zeal of his Houſe. Maugre all theſe Commands and Orders, ſtill cold we are and languiſhing. Who then ſhall be obey'd if God be not? *He who maketh his Angels Spirits and his Miniſters a flaming fire:* he who hath ſo many means to revenge himſelf upon Rebels, and to reward the Obedient: he laſtly, whoſe commands are ever juſt and ever holy.

Let no one tell me then, that this is a light fault, ſince 'tis a moſt aſſured proof that we love not God. 'Tis not ſo, when we ſearch after the things of the World. *Seek for Wiſdom*, ſays the Wiſe-man, *as Silver, and ſearch for her as for hid Treaſures.* Ah! would to God we could make ſuch an exchange of Sentiments, as to give to the World thoſe thoughts which we have for heavenly things, and to render to heavenly things what we have for the World. Is not this a crime which cannot be aggravated, to refuſe God the Ardour, the Attention, the fond affections we have for the Earth; a crime which deprives us of God, is not at all trivial: A Sin that robs us of the Divine Conſolations is not to be neglected. 'Tis for this crime we taſt ſo few Delights in our Devotions, becauſe God will not let himſelf be found but by thoſe that ſeek him, and beſtows not thoſe Divine Conſolations but upon ſuch Souls as are a living thirſt after them, as the Hart is a thirſt after the running Waters.

But ſuppoſing with theſe flattering conſciences, that the Diſtractions and Litherneſſes of Devotion are Sins of *Infirmity*, and by conſequence, leſs ſeverely puniſht, what ſhall we ſay of a great number of them, and of frequent Relapſes? will this be taken for nothing too? *If thou ſlighteſt thy ſins becauſe they are little ones, fear them rather by reaſon they are in a great number*, ſaith S. *Auguſtin.* If they ſhould appear light in the Ba-

lance of the Sanctuary, the very reckoning will destro
us; since, in a word, we return to 'em every day. Tha
grains of Sand nothing is more small; but yet i
we heap them together, we may in time make up
Mountain. We advance step after step towards Hell
and of what importance is it, what brings us thithe
whether a great Sin or many small ones? we are sti
Damn'd ne'rtheless. The *Egyptians* that were oftentim
troubled with Frogs and Flies, would not be reduced t
the uttermost extremity: Wherefore let us not ca
those small Sins, which find a place in Hell, if they b
not expiated by Repentance: but let us rather fa
with a *Doctor* of the eleventh Century, "Peradve
"ture thou wilt believe some of thy Sins very puny an
"small: would to God, that our severe Judge woul
"or could judge them such. But alas, does not all Si
"dishonour God thorough Disobedience? how th
"can the Sinner call those small that offend so great
"God? O dry and sapless Tree, unprofitable, and wo
"thy of eternal flames, what wilt thou be able to answ
"at that day when thou shalt render an account in t
"twinkling of an eye, when thou shall put every m
"ment of thy life into the Ballance, and when it sha
"be demanded of thee, in what thou hast spent t
"time? then shall a process be made of all that can
"found in thee, not only of thy words but of thy ve
"silence. Thy least thoughts will be examine
"even thy life will be a part of thy crimes, if thou h
"not liv'd for thy God. Oh! how many Sins will st
"then out of some Place, where thou hadst ne
"seen them before? they will seize upon thee as
"*Ambuscado*. They will appear to thee more terri
"and in a greater number. The Works which th
"didst believe not to be evil, nay, which thou consid
"est as good, shall be look'd upon by all as ghastly a
bla

"black Sins. This difference, ſaith St. *Baſil*, of great and "little Sins, is not to be found in the New Teſtament: one "only ſentence is pronounced againſt all: he that does "ſin is the Servant of Sin. And if we give our ſelves "the liberty to diſtinguiſh and diſcriminate Sins into "Mortal and Venial, or great, or little, it ought to be "in this Senſe, that we call all Sins great whereby we "are overcome, and all Sins little, which we are "armed to that paſs as to vanquiſh: As among Sword-"men, the conquered is ever eſteemed the more "Feeble, and the Conquerour the ſtouter. How hap-"py then is that man, that ſtrikes a terrour into him-"ſelf, and is delivered from this dangerous *Prejudice*, "that Indevotion is a light and a pardonable crime.

Meditation.

ALas! this is an Illuſion, againſt which I have great need to defend my Heart. What a bending and an inclination have I to flatter my ſelf in my Sins, and to believe them light! Wretched Soul, thou perceiveſt not thy Diſeaſe: thou believeſt thy ſelf in a good conſtitution of Health, and it may be thou art going down to the Chambers of Death. 'Tis a dangerous Malady This, to fancy I am in health and not to be ſo. O my Heart! open thine Eyes, and ſee the Dangers whereinto thou doſt continually caſt me. To day my Sins appear very ſmall, but one day they will appear to me very great. Let me

not wait and delay any longer to acknowledge the greatneſs, and feel the weight of them; ſo that from this preſent I may have 'em in deteſtation, and may repent of them in Sack-cloath and Aſhes. At ſuch a time my repentance wou'd be too late: I ſhould know the miſchief, but could find no more remedy. I drink Sin, as a Fiſh drinks Water: I do not think it affrightful, becauſe I am ſo accuſtomed to its ſight, and I fancy my Sins ſmall, for that I compare them to the greateſt, and above all, I count my Dulneſs and my Indevotion for nothing, ſeeing I perſuade my ſelf that the name of God cannot be offended but by Impieties and Blaſphemies.

Prayer.

THIS comes from thence, O my God, that I do not conceive thee ſo Great as really thou art: and I do not conceive thee ſo great as thou art, becauſe I do not ſee thee. I tremble at the preſence of a Man ſet upon a Tribunal, the Scepter in his hand, the Crown on his head, invironed with a Royal pomp; I fear him becauſe I ſee him: thoſe Objects that ſtrike my Eyes, aſtoniſh my Soul. I know that thou ſitteſt between the Cherubims; that the

the Angels cover their face before thee, unable to ſuſtain the brightneſs of thy Majeſty. I know, that torrents of fire roul about thy Throne to conſume thy Enemies. I know, there is nothing of either Angelic or humane ſight, that can withſtand the ſplendour of thy looks, nor the Fire of thine Eyes: but I believe all theſe wonders, tho I ſee them not, and therefore 'tis they make the leſs impreſſion upon my heart. Senſible I am not, but of preſent things. My eyes are more toucht during the darkneſs of the Night, with the weak light of a glittering Glow-worm, than my Imagination is moved with all the light of the Sun, when it is abſent, and fills the other part of the World with heat and brightneſs. Take therefore away, O my God, take away the Veil; make me to view thy Majeſty: redouble the force of the eyes of my Soul: fill my Imaginations with Idæas *of thy greatneſs, and of thy Divine Glory; that I may return more and more from perſuading my ſelf of the ſmallneſs of my fault, when I preſent my ſelf before thee with little reverence.*

PART II.

Of the Sources of Indevotion.

CHAP. I.

Of Impurity of Life: The first Source of Indevotion.

SInce Indevotion is so great an evil, let us try to find out its sources, that we may cut up the evil by the very Roots. Now one of the principal ones is Impurity of Life; nothing disconcerting an heart so as an evil Estate of Conscience; nothing more extinguishing the fire of Piety than the loathsom and muddy waters of Sin. Fire does not easily take in things soak'd in water: Devotion cannot easily be brought to fit Souls penetrated with Vice, one flame puts out another, and the fire of Covetousness choaks that of Zeal, as the flame of Gunpowder extinguishes that of a Candle. Devotion is a certain alacrity of heart, that disposes us to draw near to God with confidence; but how should we have this Disposition, when we are guilty of the Vice, in going to present God with such offerings, as we our selves know ought to be abominable to him? for we know that God does not care for a sullied and unclean Sacrifice. *Go*, says he, *I hate, I despise your solemn feasts, your meat-offerings and fat beasts: I receive them as the price of Whoredom, as the blood of a Swine, and as*

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Dogs head. Alas! the moſt ſpotleſs man is not enough ſo to preſent himſelf before God with Aſſurance, and the *Prophet* could ſay: *Wo is me, for I am undone becauſe I am a man of unclean lips: mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts.* 'Tis impoſſible therefore, that he who has not the Wedding-Garment on, whoſe Veſtment is ſtained with the ſpots of the Fleſh, muſt needs be put into a vaſt conſternation in thinking of him before whom the Stars and the Angels are unclean. And how can this Fear, or to ſpeak better, this Horour agree with Devotion, which is all love and all aſſurance? *Let us go with confidence,* ſays the Apoſtle St. *Paul* to all devout Souls, *to the Throne of Grace, that we may find mercy in the time of need.* To bring to God a criminal Conſcience, is to bring to him a witneſs againſt our ſelves to make our own proceſs: 'tis to deliver us up into the hands of his ſevere Juſtice. We need not therefore be ſtartled, if the wicked be Indevout and fly the preſence of God: And ſince Impurity of life wou'd do nothing elſe than take away the Hopes of being heard; This would be enough to hinder and ſtifle all Devotion. All the Vertues are intereſted, and he that would take away hope takes their very life away. How then can a wicked creature that knows God will not hear him, pray devoutly? *When you ſpread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when you make your prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of Blood.* It is for this reaſon that St. *Paul* would have us lift up pure hands without wrath and murmuring: And *David* ſays, *If I had Iniquity in me, the Lord would not have heard me.* 'Tis for this cauſe, he profeſſes elſewhere, that *he waſhes his hands in Innocency, before he goes to Gods Altar.* And why ſhould God have any regard to the Prayers of thoſe that have none for his Commandments? upon theſe Principles, the wicked man ſays to himſelf, why

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ſhould I preſent my ſelf before God? Have not my Iniquities barr'd up againſt me the Gates of Heaven, and why ſhould I go to ask of him that is reſolved to refuſe me? Unprofitable Devotions wou'd theſe be, and ſubmiſſions that wou'd only ſerve to haſten my Puniſhment. I cannot have the impudence to deſire any thing without promiſing to my ſelf ſomewhat; but I am reſolved to bridle nothing within me, and to continue in this way of living. 'Tis better therefore that every one holds where he is. Devotion is of a great extent; it takes up the whole heart; it cannot dwell in a Soul divided betwixt Avarice, Ambition, Violence, Pleaſure, and the love of the World. Wherefore if you ſometime ſee thoſe worldly Perſons, who refuſe nothing to their heart, to have their Days of Devotion well regulated, and even ſometimes to ſhed more Tears, and fetch up more ſighs than the Faithful; you may, without heſitating, conclude, that theſe are Hypocrites and pretended Zealots who would pay God with Phiſiognomy and Poſture, and cheat the World with fine Appearances. Perhaps ſome there are, who believe they are not ſuch badly devout People, when they attone for a Months Debauch with a day of faſting. But they deceive themſelves, for true Devotion is not unequal nor full of Sallies. It does not reſemble thoſe Summer-Torrents, which roul with a head-long impetuoſity, and do not continue but for a day. So that holineſs of Life is a preliminary of abſolute Neceſſity to obtain Devotion. This Vertue is one of the moſt excellent Graces that we receive from Heaven, & one of the moſt precious Gifts of the holy Spirit; but 'tis a Pearl, which is not to be caſt before Swine. 'Tis an Enamel only to be layed upon Silver or Gold. 'Tis, in one word, a Favour communicated only to privileged Souls, that is to ſay, to the pure and clean in heart: But as we ſhall have occaſion to touch again upon

upon this ſubject in another Rencounter, we will not drain it dry here.

Meditation.

WHo can expreſs the Evils and the Diſorders that Sin has cauſed in my Soul? Who can recount all the Miſchiefs wherein the Impurity of my heart ingages me? Over and above all other Evils it brings me this too, it renders me incapable of Devotion. Sin has put a ſeparation between my God and my ſelf: and therefore I am dead, for God is my life, and the Soul of my Soul; I am blind, for God is my Light. Separated from him, I am poor, for he is my Treaſure and makes up all my Riches. I am naked, for he alone gives me Rayment: Sick I am, for my health and ſtrength comes from that Sun of Righteouſneſs, who carries healing in his wings. Sin has rob'd me of him, and has *eclipſed* him as to me, and I continue languiſhing away, being far from the *Principle* of my Life. In this faintneſs I know not how to produce thoſe vigorous movements of Devotion that elevate the Soul, and carry it towards Paradice. Sin is a thick, foggy, heavy Wet that ſticks to my Wings; it is a Weight which oppreſſes me, arreſts all my Soarings, and renders

renders all my efforts uſeleſs. I feel a Law in my Members, which Wars and oppoſes it ſelf to the Law of my Mind, and makes me the ſlave of Sin. Inſomuch as I do not the Good that I would, yet I do the Ill that I would not.

Prayer.

O *Divine Sun of my Soul! break out, and Diſſipate theſe Clouds. Thou great Deliverer, break theſe Irons, open this Priſon, and free me from this Bondage and Captivity. Thou art moſt pure, let me not be unclean; Almighty, let me not be miſerable; All Life, let me not be dead: Draw me out of this calamitous Eſtate, this deplorable* nothing. *Diſengage me from under this Burthen of Mortality and corruption, ſo as I may walk lightly and chearfully, or rather I may fly ſwiftly even to thee. Pardon all my Sins, that they may not terriſie me, and baniſh me from thy Throne. Stop the courſe of my Iniquities, that they may not hinder my Prayers from mounting up before thee. Let me not ſtill continue to render my ſelf unworthy of thy Favours, by the ill uſage I make of thee, nor to grieve thy holy Spirit by the uncleanneſs of my Life, that*

that only can inſpire me with the Ardour I ſeek after: That only can render my Soul devout: and it's preſence only can warm my Affections. But will it be pleas'd to bring it's light into a Soul ſo polluted and ſo dark as mine? Prepare for thy ſelf, O my God, a lodging within me worthy ſo great a Gueſt and Stranger, that it may come and enliven me, that I may live, and love thee; that I may burn with the Fire of thy Love, and with that of Devotion.

CHAP II.

Touching the love of the World: the ſecond Source of Indevotion.

BEhold one of the great reaſons, why there are ſo few Devout in the World: It is, becauſe all are in love with the World: and this Love is one of the moſt efficacious Temptations, wherewith the Devil ſerves himſelf to diſtract and call us elſewhere. This love has pierced our very marrow and entrails; and ſeeing 'tis the maſter of our Heart, can the love of God dwell there? can darkneſs and light, can Fire and Water, Life, and Death, be comparable together? *In him that loveth the World, the love of the Father does not dwell.* Where there is no love of God, how can there be any of Devotion, which is nothing elſe but love? what is it that makes up the fire and the zeal of Devout People, but Love? What is it that makes the deſires ſpring up of union with

with God in Devout Souls but Love? what makes us find a *Gusto* in the possession? the same Love. What does indue good Souls with a readiness and alacrity to serve God? Is it not Love that renders every thing easie to him that loves? But as much as the love of God succours and helps Devotion, so much does the love of the World cruelly cross it. It extinguishes heat; it stifles the desires; it estranges from God; it takes away the taste of heavenly things; it purloins the heart from it self, and carries it elsewhere. *Lot*'s Wife advances towards the Mountain, but hath her heart in *Sodom*, she turns her Eyes thither. The superiour part of the Soul, which is in love with Heaven, makes some efforts to lift it self up to God: but this same lower part, wherein the Passions reign, turns its eyes towards the World, and wheedles the heart out of the Commerce whereinto it entred with its God: *Rachel*, in craving her fathers house, carries along with her his *antick* Images: In quitting the World to enter into our Closets, we bring with us its *Idols*, that is, its Ideas and vain Images: and from thence proceed our distractions, and those unhappy thoughts that traverse us in the midst of our Devotion. These are the Idols of Gold & Silver, the Devils of Ambition and Covetousness, which an hundred times pass and repass in our mind, in a quarter of an hour to distract us. When we come to Prayer, our head is filled with a thousand Ideas of good and evil, of Desires and Fears, of Dangers, and distrust of hope: and despair, of Joys and Divertisements, and a thousand other vain Objects. A Soul at this rate taken up and imploy'd, can it give place to the *Ideas* of God's greatness, of his Majesty, Goodness, Mercy, and Love? Faith, Repentance, Charity, Zeal, Hopes, Acknowledgments, and a thousand other Vertues, which compose, or at least, help Devotion, can they agree well with these Emotions that the commerce of the World communicates to us? We scarce ever think of

of things, but such as possess our hearts: if we lov'd the World less, 'twould not come so often into our minds. We are hurried away with it: it is a *Demon* we know not how to lay: we cannot find a Sanctuary against its Persecutions: the solitude and affrightful Objects of the Desert, cannot banish it. An *Antient* tells us, that amid his *Macerations*, his mind sometimes transported him out of his Solitude into the company of young Women a dancing. I say then, we ought to imploy all our strength to dry up this second source, if we would be Devout. *My little children, love not the World, nor the things that are in the World.* We should Crucifie the Old-Man, if we would *present our selves to God a living, holy, and acceptable Sacrifice, which is our reasonable Service.* So that one of the most profitable Meditations, by which we can prepare our selves for Prayer, is that of the Worlds vanity. It is good to enter into our selves, to consider the brevity of humane life, the inconstancy of the Worlds Glory, which flourishes in the morning and fades and withers in the evening. It is good to repeat frequently to our heart, what the Holy Spirit has said heretofore. *All flesh is as Grass, and all the Glory of man as the flower of Grass; the Grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away. As for man, his days are as Grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. Man that is born of a Woman is of few Days, and full of trouble: he cometh forth like a Flower and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.* His riches vanish away, and his Sins continue: his honours abandon him; but his torments do not quit him. Thus by crying with a loud voice, *Vanity of Vanities*, in an heart infected by the bad Air of the World, it may chase away those worldly thoughts, and fright away those Birds which come to spoil our Sacrifices, and devoureth

good

good ſeed of Piety, which the Heavenly ſower had caſt into our hearts.

Meditation.

HOw miſerable am I! I can ſtoutly cry, *Vanity of Vanities*, to my Heart depraved and corrupted with the love of the World, and yet ſtill it is never the better. I am ſufficiently perſuaded of all that is told me, I know mighty well, that the World is only made up of appearances, I know it hath very much Gall and Wormwood for a little Honey. I know that Pleaſures are Twiſts, that ſnarl and intangle the Soul, and train it to Death. But I am not yet acquainted, how theſe knowledges remain in my underſtanding and make no manner of Impreſſion upon my Will. I believe, I ſee, and I do nothing. I ſee a thouſand and a thouſand People which the World plunges into corruption and brings to Hell. I ſee it is a great enemy of my Saviour, and that the chief thing which it compaſſes upon them that give themſelves up to it, is, to take away from them the Love of God. 'Tis lewd, 'tis dangerous, I know it; yet notwithſtanding I know not how to break the Cords which ho

hold me tied to it. I fly it, it follows me: it lays hold of me in all places, and I meet it every where. O my Soul, make one laſt and utmoſt effort to break theſe miſchievous Chains, to make a Divorce with this Enemy. Say to it with a firm voice, Get thee behind me, *Satan*, thou art an offence unto me. The love of the World is an Enemy of the love of God; And alſo interchangably the love of God is an Enemy to the love of the World. Make therefore, O my Soul, the love of thy God to enter into thee, that it may baniſh thence the love of the World: Set theſe two enemies to Daggers drawing, and favour his ſide, who wou'd ſave thee againſt him who wou'd deſtroy thee. Love him that loves thee, although he ſtrike thee ſometimes as if he did not love thee: And have a hatred for him that hates thee, albeit he acts as if he lov'd thee. Return to this fervent Spouſe a love as great as he has for thee.

Prayer.

BUT without thee, O my God, I cannot love thee, nor ceaſe to love the World without thy aid. Pull up therefore this harſh and bitter

Root,

Root, which ſhoots up, and turns me out of the way of ſalvation. Open mine eyes, take the Evil from off the World, draw away the Mask and the Paint wherewith it is covered, that I may ſee all its Deformity, and ſhiver at the ſight. On the other ſide, make me to ſee thy face, and thy beauty, that my Soul may be raviſhed and I may no more run after the vanities of the World. Enrich me with thy good things, that my Soul being fulfilled, may wiſh nothing more, and that my deſires may all expire in the joy of thy Love. Then ſhall I run in thy paths with all my might. Then my Soul, being inflamed and fulfilled with heavenly fire, ſhall not, cannot any longer be hindred from lifting up its ſelf to thee with all the ardour that one ought to have for the Sovereign *Good. Then in its Devotions ſhall my Soul be no more troubled with the vain Idols of the World. Being filled with thee and with thy Love, it will not be able to furniſh and afford room for any thing elſe.*

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CHAP. III.

Of the too great ſenſibility towards earthly Pleaſures: The third ſource of Indevotion.

THis Love of the World is a great Trunk, which divides it ſelf into many Branches, that are alſo ſources of Indevotion. The firſt branch of this Love is the too great ſenſibility towards earthly pleaſures. Theſe pleaſures are of two ſorts: The firſt are highly criminal, and are thoſe we call Debauches of the *Men of the times*: and of theſe, certain it is, that not only the exceſſive ſenſibility but the leaſt taſte we take of them is the mortal Enemy of Devotion. Spiritual pleaſures are of a taſte ſo vaſtly different from carnal ones, that at the ſame time one cannot love the one and the other. A palat imbrued with Gall and Wormwood, and which has never taſted of other Savours, cannot endure our Sugar and Honey: A man ſunk into the unſavoury ſweetneſs of Sin, will find all the ſweetneſſes of Grace of ill taſte. There is another ſort of worldly Pleaſures, whoſe Innocence the World maintains, becauſe the crime is not ſo viſible: They are called Innocent, and they may be ſo, if they did not ſoon become criminal by the abuſe of them, and they all may be great obſtacles to Devotion, more than we are aware of. The Holy Ghoſt is called the Comforter; and the taſte which the Pious find in the Exerciſes of Holineſs is termed Spiritual Conſolation. But to whom is the Comforter and the Conſolation deſtin'd but to the afflicted? For certain therefore thoſe Souls that are filled with the joy of the World, are not proper

per to receive theſe Divine conſolations, and the whole-ſom impreſſions of the Divine Comforter; 'Tis for this reaſon the ever bleſſed *Jeſus* ſaith, *Bleſſed are they which mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* And S. *Auſtin* ſaith to God: *Thou art the only true and the only Sovereign pleaſure capable of filling the Soul: Do thou caſt far from me all thoſe falſe pleaſures, and at the ſame time enter thou into their place, thou, who art more ſweet and more agreeable than all Pleaſures, tho not to Flesh and Blood.* The *Manna* did not fall upon the *Iſraelites* but when the Victuals they had brought out of *Egypt* were conſumed. And queſtionleſs that divine Manna of Grace, thoſe Raviſhments and thoſe joys of Devotion are not communicated to thoſe that have a magazine furniſhed with the things of *Egypt*, and the pleaſures of the World.

A perſon that returns from a Ball or a Comedy is very much indiſpoſed for Devotion. Some may ſay in favour of the Theater, that it is become chaſte, and and that we ſee there more Leſſons of Vertue than Examples of Vice: But others may ſay, that the Paſſions do not appear there animated but in defence of *Honour*, and that there are produced no other ſentiments but thoſe of Generoſity. For my part, I ſay, that the Vertues of the *Theater* are crimes, according to the mind of the Goſpel; and when there is any thing good heard there, it is very much ſullied by the impurity of the Lips and the Imaginations thorou gh which it paſſes. *Oh Impiety!* ſaid *Clemens Alexandrinus, you have made Heaven to deſcend upon the Theater, and God is become a Comedy.* Oh Impiety! we may ſay, in imitation him, you have made Vertue to mount the Theater and you have made her an Actreſs: Our Saviour will not have his Preachers wear Buskins on their feet and Masks on their face. *Tragedy*, ſaies St. *Cyprian, makes ancient Crimes to revive in its verſes, ſo as they may*

die of old age. It draws them out from under the Tomb of ten or twelve Ages : And in the preſent age we learn ſuch Crimes, as perhaps we ſhould never have thought on; we obſerve, that what has bin done heretofore may alſo be done to day; So we make examples of thoſe Actions which had ceas'd to be Crimes; nevertheleſs the innocence of Tragedy may be pleas'd with more colour. The *Lacedemonians* were wiſe men, who baniſhed theſe evil Arts from among them, by reaſon, ſaid they, that it was not ſafe to violate the Laws, even in appearance, and that one ought to reſpect them even upon the Theater.

This makes me remember a ſaying of *Cicero*, that it is not *honeſt* by way of ſporting the mind to exerciſe one's Philoſophy and *Rhetorick* againſt the Gods, in arguing either their Exiſtence or their Providence without being an Atheiſt. This veneration we owe to them of not diverting our ſelves at their expence. I ſay the ſame of Vertue. It is not handſome to pleaſe ones ſelf in ſeeing Vertue or rejoycing or wronged. But beſides all this, theſe ſights are abſolutely diſagreeing with Devotion, ſince they fill the Soul with vain Paſſions, and we have need of a free mind. They make real Joys and Griefs to ſpring up for imaginary Adventures. Into the Mind they put *Idea's*, and into the Heart vain Motions, which ruine the holy Diſpoſitions that we would eſtabliſh in a devout Soul.

The ſame I ſay of a Play; a Fury which agitates men like a kind of *Demoniac* Spirit. A Man ſees his Life and his Death, (that I may ſo ſpeak) his Fortune and his Misfortune a rouling, with inconceivable Tranſports and Inquietudes. His Soul is agitated at the ſame time with a thouſand Paſſions, with Fears, Deſires, Hopes, and his Heart is entirely put beſides the Seat. Is ſuch a Man in a Condition to lift up his Soul to God? Such fine Devotions as theſe are they, which are made after having paſt half the Night in this exerciſe. The Tempeſt has been over great, a long time will the

Waves

Waves be moving; the Soul will be a good while a levelling it ſelf: and yet after this the Sweetneſſes of Devotion will not be according to the Palate, for that they are not carnal Pleaſures, of which alone it is ſenſible. Whence it comes to paſs, that young People are very rarely fit for the Elevations of Devotion. They are but lately come into the World, and all is it appears mighty fine. Theſe Pleaſures they gulp down by long Draughts, and nothing appears pleaſant unto 'em but what flatters Fleſh and Blood, which boils in their Veins. Hence alſo it comes, that the Conſtitution, where the *Blood* has the Aſcendant, which is the Temperament of the World's Joy, is leſs proper for Devotion than that which has the Ingredients of Earth and Melancholy: the former is like to Matter extreamly combuſtible, which takes fire at the leaſt Sparkle; but the latter being more difficult to be moved, is leſs ſenſible of what charms others, and that which pierces through them, negligently paſſes it by.

We ought therefore to draw Men out of this error. They imagine they can divide themſelves betwixt heavenly and earthly Joy; but it is impoſſible. In the Rank of unclean Creatures the Law plac'd thoſe *Amphibious* Birds which both ſwim and flye, and live in a double Element of Air and Water. This is the Emblem of worldly Men; evermore they ſwim in fleſhly Pleaſure, and ſometimes by weak Soarings they try to get out thence and reach Heaven: but it happens to 'em juſt as it does to thoſe *Aquatic* Fowls, whoſe flight goes no further than to touch and curle the *Superficies* of the Water with their Wings, and then they forthwith fall down again. *Delicate and rare,* ſays *St.* Bernard, *is the Divine Conſolation: 'tis a chaſt Woman, but jealous, who deſerving only to be beloved, cannot give her ſelf to him that runs after ſtrange Women.* Where-

for

fore *Solomon* pronounceth *Vanity* upon all the Pleaſures of the Earth, whereof he had made a very large Experience. It's for this alſo that *David* declares ſo often that he will not have any other Pleaſure than that of his God: *To draw near to God is my Good; to be united to him is my All. Forſake all*, ſays St. *Auſtin, and thou ſhalt find all: for that Man will find all in God that deſpiſes all for God's ſake.* Behold here one of the main Counſels which can be given to pious Minds which undertake to diſpoſe themſelves to Devotion. Renounce, renounce, thou devout Soul, all the Pleaſures of the Earth, and make choice of Spiritual ones; let reading in holy Writings charm thee, as worldly-minded People are charmed by their ill Books: let religious Aſſemblies and preaching of the Word divert thee, as much as they divert themſelves by their criminal Shows: let the Works of Mercy toward the Poor and Afflicted be uſed by thee, as the men of the Age uſe their vain Courſes, their Sports, and their Converſe: and if thou takeſt any Recreations and Refreſhments, let Honeſty and ſevere Vertue be the Governeſs of all thy Pleaſures.

Meditation.

HOW unhappy art thou, O my Soul, to be born in *Ægypt*, and not to be ſenſible of the bleſſings of the true *Canaan*? for this reaſon thou turneſt thy eyes ſo often upon the World: and at the ſame hour that thy Heart ſhould be intire in Heaven at the time of thy Devotion and Prayers, thou thinkeſt on Onions, Garlick and Fleſh-pots, which thou didſt eat, when

thou waſt the Slave of the Devil and th
World. Thou haſt not yet taſted th
delights of Pious and Devout Souls, that ſay
I am ſatisfied as with Marrow and Fatne
Oh! how good the Lord is, I have taſted him
He brought me into his Banquetting-Houſe
His Love is ſweeter than Wine, and tha
Honey, Let him kiſs me with the Kiſſes
his Mouth. Would to God I were honou
red with theſe ſecret communication
whereof my Saviour makes ſome Privileg
ed Souls to partake; which fill them wit
Joy even in the midſt of Torments, an
make them find muſick in Priſons, and
the rattling of their Irons. Learn, O m
Soul, learn to ſeek thy Pleaſures and D
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thirſt after? doſt thou love Beauty? In Go
thou wilt find it, and God will give it th
thy ſelf: for thou wilt become glorious an
full of light by the commerce thou ſha
have with him. Doſt thou love Life an
Health? *He is the well of Life, and in h*
Light ſhall we ſee Light: and he will com
munica

municate a Life to thee ever healthful and vigorous, that is Eternal Life. Doſt thou love pleaſures? Lo, he will make thee drink at the Stream of his Delights; He will fill thee with the Wine prepared by the Divine Wiſdom, that ſaith, *I have mixt my Wine, I have killed my fat Beaſts.* He will cauſe thee to ſee ſuch Objects, as will raviſh thee: He will make thee hear a ſweet and charming Muſick in the conſort of Angels and Saints, who eternally ſing the praiſes of our God. After ſo many Bleſſings either already received or already poſſeſt in hope, can I ſtill be at all ſenſible of the vain Pleaſures of the Earth.

Prayer.

O *My God, my divine Saviour, come and fill my Soul with thoſe ſweetneſſes that thou communicateſt to thy faithful ſervants; give me the bread which came down from Heaven, the true Manna and bread of Angels, that makes me taſte of Pleaſures, which ſtifle and choak the ſenſe of worldly pleaſures, and the taſte of ſublunary divertiſements. Let thy Sabbaths be my Feaſt days: Let thy word be ſweeter to me than Honey, and than the drops of Honey; And let the meditation of thoſe joys which thou haſt for me in Heaven, raviſh me*

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Prayer.

O *My God, my divine Saviour, come and fill my Soul with those sweetnesses that thou communicatest to thy faithful servants; give me the bread which came down from Heaven, the true Manna and bread of Angels, that makes me taste of pleasures, which stifle and choak the sense of worldly pleasures, and the taste of sublunary divertisements. Let thy Sabbaths be my Feast days: Let thy* [illegible] *word be sweeter to me than Honey.* [illegible] *than the drops of Honey; And let the* [illegible] *meditation of those joys which thou prepar*[illegible] *est for* [illegible] *me in Heaven, ravish me*

me in such a manner, that I may be no more either the World's or my own, but be intirely Thine. Make Heaven to descend upon Earth in my favour; Enlarge my heart; Make there a little Paradise: Shed down upon it so great an abundance of thy Light of Grace, as may imitate and approach the Light of Glory. Make thy Rivers to run a cross this Paradise: Plant therein the Tree of Life: And lay up there so grand an influence of good things, that my own Wealth may make me look upon that of the World with an high disdain and contempt; and that from under the Throne, where thou shalt have plac'd my Soul, it may consider all the Palaces of the World like meer Cottages.

CHAP. IV.

Of Worldly Troubles and Cares: a fourth Source of Indevotion.

NOW we come to another branch of the Love of the World, and a new obstacle to Devotion; I mean earthly Cares and Riches. Black and horrid Devils, that come to cross us, that draw us frequently out of the company of our Lord *Christ Jesus*, to lead us among Sepulchres, and that walk, as in the said Ruines of our Fortune and Gr[illegible] *World*; so that this temptation is happy Persons in the [illegible] precedent are: and whereas at least as ordinary as the [illegible]s, when we have lost it, the World possesses our He[illegible] we

we bewail it moſt bitterly. A man, whom againſt his will, a contrary Wind drives from the Haven where he would be, always turns his Eyes on that ſide, and does not loſe the View of it, but with inconceivable Regret. If he would take any reſt, the Images of his Country, his dear Children, and his Friends, return inceſſantly into his mind to plague him and continue his Torture. So the afflicted Soul, that would retire into its ſelf, to be united with God, doth ſee, amidſt its Exerciſes, the Images of its misfortunes, which awaken its Grief and draw it from Heaven into the bottomleſs pit. Theſe are the Waſps and Flies, whoſe Stings are ſo piercing: whilſt we are fixt ſo on holy Work, and give up to it our whole attention, then theſe come and prick us ſo to the quick, that we are forced to lay our hands on the part affected. Theſe are the Whips, wherewith the Taſkmaſters of *Ægypt* ſerve 'emſelves to haſten us to the work of the Fleſh and the labour of Bricks. Theſe Taſk-maſters are the Devils, that ſay with *Pharaoh*; this People is Idle; ſince they will ſerve their own God, let us redouble their Imployments: and hence they rowze up thoſe ſmarting and ſtinging cares, recalling into the memory of one; the loſs of a Cauſe in a Court of Judicature, and of another the Ill eſtate of his affairs, an he ruine of his Family. And theſe thoughts like ſo many ſtings, haſten a man to return to his works of Straw, to his worldly occupation, that make him to forget God's Service. When therefore we would eſpouſe our ſelves in the boſom of God, we muſt drive and fright away theſe Gnats that whizz about our *Ears*, and we muſt lay theſe *Demons*. And as the Spouſe ſaid, *I charge you, O Daughters of* Jeruſalem, *by the Roes and by the Hinds of the Field that ye ſtir not up nor awake my Love till he pleaſe*: So we ought to ſay, Go ye carnal thoughts, thy earthly anxieties

ties and netling Cares: away, ye Devils, return into your bottomless pits; let my Soul rest, and do not disturb its holy Conversations; do not draw it out of the Arms of its beloved, whose possession makes up all its Joy and all its Beatitude.

Good remedies there are against this Temptation, which we ought to make use of. The first is, to discomfit and destroy in us the love of the World: when we shall love it no more, we shall no more be sensible of the mischiefs and misfortunes that befall us on that side. So we don't love Money, Riches nor Grandeur, we shall not be touched with the loss of them. So we love God only, we shall evermore be content, because we shall never lose him. The World makes men pay Interest for its Pleasures: the grief it causes in abandoning us, is much greater than the joy we taste in possessing it: and therefore we should dissieize ourselves in good time, that we may lose it without trouble. If we have cares that seem lawful unto us, and which we know not how to part withall, let us follow the precept and example of *David*, *Cast thy care upon God and he will take care for thee*. We do not want example to maintain this reliance. We can produce an *Elijah* that was fed by Ravens; a Prophet in the Lions Den that was respected by those Monsters; *Israelites* in uncultivated and desolate Places, upon whom the very Heavens rained down Bread. Have we need of Assurance and Promises? see that of our Lord *Jesus*: *Are not two Sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many Sparrows. Behold the Fowls of the Air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them*. God that takes care of the young Ravens, that call upon him, will he desert us? without doubt we must have a great stock of Incredulity to resist so great Promises.

After

After all, let us remember to think, how our Cares do change nothing at all in the ſtate of our Concerns, and how they turn our Souls topſie turvy, and render them incapable of Devotion. Upon which account our ever bleſſed *Jeſus* would not have us take care for the Morrow, for fear it ſhould trouble our Devotion to day.

Wherefore, in entring into our Cloſet, we muſt ſay to our ſelves: why doſt thou take care for ſo many things, and it may be thou muſt die to morrow? Afraid thou art of wanting neceſſaries for Life, but thou conſidereſt not, that theſe neceſſaries may be reduced into a ſmall compaſs. Thou haſt loſt ſome Wealth, thou art afraid of loſing it, 'tis therefore God hath retrencht thee of the ſuperfluity. Whereas, how canſt thou be afraid of wanting any manner of thing, when in that moment thou goeſt to find God, to whom appertain all things, and addeſt with St. *Auſtin, Caſt thy ſelf, O my Soul, into the Arms of God; and fear not, leſt he ſhould let thee fall, for his Arms ſuſtain Heaven and Earth.* And having ſaid this, ſhut the door againſt all the troubles of the Fleſh, and caſt them under thy feet, as thou falleſt on thy Knees.

Meditation.

ALas! I have good reaſon to weep; Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might bewail my Sins. This is a ſadneſs after a godly ſort, and a Repentance not to be repented of. In this Reſpect, mine Eyes are without moiſture, and dry as Rocks. Oh! that *Moſes* his Rod ſtruck me, and

the Terrour of Gods Judgments seiz'd me, that I might be able to cast out Currents of Water. Yet nevertheless I do not want tears to mourn my mishaps, and my worldly misfortunes: So that I am not covetous of Tears, but I distribute 'em ill. Wherefore, O my Soul, art thou so toucht at the loss of some goods whereof thou had'st only the use, and which Death at least would have infallibly ravisht from thee? Dost thou not know, that the World and its Fortunes are all of Glass? They shine, but they are brittle: The least blow shatters them, and makes 'em to flye into a thousand pieces; why then shouldest thou think it strange that Glass should break between thy Fingers? Why art thou so sensible of Injuries and Offences: And why dost thou make the malignity of another thy own misery? why dost thou so bitterly lament the loss of some Persons that Death has taken up from thee? they were not thine, they were Gods, who lent 'em thee, and has retaken them. In short, Why art thou so prodigal of Tears, whereof thou reapest no fruit? that is, to imploy ones Labour in that which profiteth not, When thou bewailest, O my Soul, thy misfortunes, thy tears do

not make thy misfortunes to ceaſe; but mourn for thy Sins, and thy Tears will deſtroy them. They will whirl them away like a Torrent or a Deluge, and they will be found no more. Thy carnal anxieties trouble thy Devotion; But the Grief which thou ſhalt have for thy Sins and Infirmities will augment it, and God will *comfort* thee.

Prayer.

COme therefore, thou Holy Ghoſt, the Comforter, who wert promiſed to us by the Son in behalf of the Father. Come ſweeten my bitter Anguiſhes by thy Delights and Mercies. Come and recompence my loſſes by thy Riches. Give me ſuch joy as paſſes all underſtanding. Give me Piety, that I may have contentment of Mind, and that the one and the other being joyned together may be great Gain to me, and compoſe my ſoverign happineſs. Come and place my Soul in ſo firm a Seat and Poſture, that it may never be jogged or ſtagger'd even by the rudeſt blows. Come, and reſtore back to me what I have loſt, Goods, Poſſeſſions, Houſes, Husband, Wife, Children, Kindred, and my deareſt Frinds. Come my dear Saviour, and let me poſſeſs thee perfectly

instead of all things. The World has taken away all it hath given me: But it cannot ravish from me what thou shalt bestow upon me. I make a Sacrifice to thee of all the Goods which I have lost: If I have not lost 'em for thy Name, yet at least I at present patiently suffer the loss of them for thy Name's sake. And therefore I hope thou wilt reward me as if I had lost them for thee. In this Hope I banish my Cares and Troubles far from me, that the end they may come no more to disturb and interrupt my Repose. O my God, make the Wall of my Closet impenetrable Ramparts, such as cannot be pierced by the Darts of my persecuting Enemies: So that I may be there in thy Presence as in a quiet and safe Haven against the Tempests wherein my Life is lost; and that so the Commerce which my Soul would have with thee, may not be interrupted by the remembrance of my Misfortunes, but I may forget all my Griefs and Calamities in thy Presence.

CHAP

CHAP. V.

Of Excessive Business: A fifth Source of Indevotion.

THIS is also another branch of the Love of the World, and another let and hindrance to Devotion. We love the World, and give up our selves intirely to its Imployments One imploys himself in Traffique, and thinks of nothing else. Another he is oppressed with the Affairs of other men, which he makes his own through interest: He pleads, as he saith, for the defence of Justice, but it is too often for iniquity; and though he gains his Cause, yet he loses his Conscience. A physician Visits his Patients with a design to make 'em pay dear for his Services and Attendance. The man of business is ever thumbing his Arithmetick: The Mechanick exercising his Trade: the Husband-man Agriculture: And to these several ways goes the greatest and best part of their time. And so much is the World corrupted, as they think they deserve praises, in that among the sundry ways of spending time, this is the most innocent: but it becomes criminal as soon as it robs us of our God, and slackens our Piety. The mind of man is so made, as it cannot vigorously tend but to one Mark; it cannot ardently *will* but one thing: insomuch as if thou givest up the ardour and force of thy desires to thy Family and thy Occupations, God will but *partake* of the Reliques of thy Soul and thy languishing motions.

I do not pretend here, as if Persons of all conditions could give up themselves wholly to contemplation. This contemplative Life is the Life of Angels and not of men: and since that we are in part *Body*, we must also live after a manner partly corporal. A Bird let

its

its wings be never ſo ſtrong, cannot always be flying: A Soul has not ſtrength enough to be evermore lifted up to Heaven. I know moreover we ought to ſerve the neceſſities of Nature. In a word, I do not oppoſe the *Order* that man has received from God to eat his Bread by the ſweat of his Brows, and by his labour ſix days in the Week; all I aim at is, that the imployments of *Martha* may not hinder the work of *Mary*, and that the Body, being the worſe Part of us, may not carry away the better part of our time. If there be any thing wherein we ought to laud and praiſe the great condeſcention of God to us, it is in this, all our time is his, but he pleaſed to give us ſix parts in ſeven: *Six days ſhalt thou labour*, and on the ſeventh reſt. Seeing he has forgone ſo much, we ought at leaſt to be very exact to pay him this Tythe of our time, one day in ſeven, one hour in ſeven. Six hours therefore ſhould not ſlip by in a day without returning to God, to give him the ſeventh. Do more, and imagine not you can do too much, ſince you owe him all.

Why will you not have the ſame regard and conſideration for the Soul as you have for the Body? On it you beſtow Refreſhment and Reſt, and for this you intercept your moſt important Concerns, that you may repair the decayed forces of Nature. Take heed there be not made too great a diſſipation of the Spirits of Grace: call the Soul to its exerciſes of Devotion as to repaſts, which renders it vigorous; and as to ſleep, during which it lyes in the Arms of its God; labour often in this Divine Recollection, and to withdraw the Soul from thoſe wandring courſes it makes in humane affairs.

Meals and repaſts haſtily taken are followed with a difficult digeſtion, and very little nouriſhment; and therefore we repoſe our ſelves while we eat, let not any one then imagin he can ſerve God, whilſt he is doing ſomething elſe. Theſe ſtirrings and turbulent Devotions are of ill con-

conſequence, and inſtead of nouriſhing do load and clog the Conſcience. We muſt therefore in our ordinary imployments ſet aſide ſome hour, wherein our Souls may retire themſelves, as it were in an Haven, to rejoyce over a Calm after a boyſterous Tempeſt. Whilſt the Water is rouling or ſtirring, it can neither receive nor reflect well the Image of the Sun: ſo a Soul in continual action cannot receive the impreſſions of Grace, the beams of the glorious *Jeſus*, nor the likeneſs of our great God. Thou raging and rouling Sea, hold thy ſelf then ſtill and huſt, ſtop thy Surges to be the Looking-glaſs of the Heavens, to the intent all thoſe matchleſs and illuſtrious lights may penetrate thee, and paint themſelves in thee. *How can the knowledge of God*, ſaid *St.* Baſil, *enter into a Soul taken up with a crowd of carnal thoughts? It ought to be maſter of its time and its ſelf, to be preſented to God.* Pharaoh *knew this well, ſince he told the* Iſraelites, *What ye ſay*, come and let us ſacrifice to our God, *proceeds from that ye are Idle.*

Certain I am, God does not love ſlothful People: and how ſhould he love idle Lives, that will take account of every idle word? But yet neither does he love People over buſie. *Martha, Martha*, ſays he, *Thou art cumbered and troubled about many things*; *Thy Siſter* Mary *has choſen the good Part.* She did not labour about Evil things, but too many things: She did even good works in doing what ſhe did; ſhe ſerved our Lord, ſhe prepared him meat and drink. If there could be exceſs in theſe holy Employments, when they hinder us from approaching often enough to the Throne of Grace; what muſt *we* believe touching the imployments of the World? what people will be excluded from the ſacred feaſt of our Saviour? Why, thoſe men of Buſineſs, one of whom, forſooth, bought a yoke of Oxen, and will go to try them; another has purchaſed an Houſe, and he muſt needs go ſee it: a third is contracted to a Wife, and he will wed her. Such Perſons will

will find the Gate shut and barr'd, they come not time, neither will they find any one to open unto the It will be said to them as it was to others, go ye wo kers of Nothing, *I know you not.* Let us not say the such a way I must go to day, to morrow another; must do such a thing, and finish such an affair; afterwa I will think upon God! O my Soul. Thy great concern to set thee well with thy God; 'tis to consult him often bout the Disposition, wherein he is with thee; 'tis to s licite his mercy, and implore the succours of his Grac 'tis to pay him thy just Homages, and place all thy int est in him. It is the one thing necessary, choose then *good part which shall not be taken away from thee: T one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behin and reaching forth unto those things which are before; press toward the Mark.*

Let not therefore the Indevout Person come wit his Objection from the multiplicity of his Affairs: th most busie steal their moments for Pleasure, and wh can't they then for a Duty? Let no one oppose us wit the goodness and innocence of particular Imployment nothing is innocent that renders us culpable befor God, in estranging us from him. But what shall w say of those Persons, who create to themselves affairs o vast and mighty importance, in the due setting of *Tower*, or accurate scituation of a *Spot*, who consult the Glass an hundred times to place every thing in its pro per order; who imploy the best part of their lives in these *Idle Businesses*; and amidst all this, find scarce a mi nute to consecrate to Devotion; I say, that these Wome are to render an account of all, and of the time which they have so miserably squander'd away, and of the Beauty, whereof they have made so bad a use, and of th unjust Division they have made betwixt God and the own *Idol*; seeing they have given all their Hours to th Service of *this*, and to God only some moments of un advised and hasty Devotion.

Meditation.

WRetched Soul, how miserable art thou, to be obliged to serve perpetually a Body, that renders thee nothing but evil for all the good that thou hast done it. Thou *travellest* after many things: Thou runnest from one end of the World to the other: Thou ventures upon the Tempests of the Sea; thou exposest thy self to their fury. Thy Body is burnt by the heats of the Sun: From Icy *Climates* thou passest into the *Torrid Zone*: For whole years thou sail'st upon the mouth of Abysses to seek Riches, Gold, Silver, precious Stones, and all manner of Delicates. If thou dost not do this, thou dost somewhat else, which is no better, and thou sustain'st as great Labours, and which are no less vain, and all for a Body that is Dust, and must return to Dust. True it is, that to take care of thy Body is a Yoak that God has laid upon thee, but thou thy self makest this Yoak infinitely more weighty. The Body would be content with a very little, if thou would'st serve it as it should be served; and by consequence it would rob thee of but a little time, but thou givest it all. What

blind

blindness, and what fury is this? Wh
will return to thee of all thy Labours? T
Body, for which thou takest so much pai
will carry nothing away with it of th
Riches which thou amassest for it, excep
winding-sheet, an herse-cloth, and perchan
will have and hold a short while five or
feet of Earth. O my Soul, it's of thee, th
ought'st to think, and for thee thou ought
to provide. Thou art a Queen, and th
becomest a Slave: Thou should'st be serv
and lo! thou servest. Thou neglectest
gather the true Riches together; and ther
fore thou art poor, blind, and naked.
counsel thee then to get Gold, Raymen
and Nourishment of him, who saith, *Eve*
one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters,
Wine and Milk without Mony and without pri

Prayer.

MAke me, O my God, to know that th
art the sovereign Good, the only good, wo
thy alone to be sought after, and worthy alo
to be loved; that I may no longer run after t
vain Shadows of Greatness and Glory. Ma
me to know the true Goods, so as I may bes
all my Love and Care upon them; So as I m

no more make the principal workings of my thoughts to reflect worldly Employments; So as I may keep my Body under as a Slave that hath an inclination to rebell: but that I may serve thee as a Master whose inclinations are ever favourable unto me. Let me with assurance first of all seek thy Kingdom, and thy Righteousness, and then all the rest shall be added unto me; Suffer no Ingratitude nor Distrust in my Soul: Nor let it doubt of the Goodness of him, who has given so many marks of his Care and Tenderness over it. How can it fear, O my God, that thou wilt let it want any thing, thou, who feedest the young Ravens, that cry unto thee, and the Lions Whelps that lay them down in their Dens. It labours about this Life, as if it were to be Eternal; and it neglects the other Life, as if it were never to come. I believe, O my God, but help thou my unbeleif. Make me to see the Truth and Excellency of Eternal Life, that I may slight the present Life; that I may make me such Friends, as may receive me into everlasting Habitations; that I may acquire such Riches as I may carry along with me; and that I may make choice of that good Part which shall not be taken away from me.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Custom of letting the mind ramble on different Objects: A sixth Source of Indevotion.

I Believe that this is also another Source of our Indevotion, and especially of our *Distractions*. During Prayer we know not how to fix our Heart, our mind wanders, and our attention is lost. Whence proceeds this, but from a pernicious custom we have, of giving a soaring vaunt to our Imagination? It is in man, what Quick-Silver is in Metals: It rouls, it runs glibly up and down; A little fire makes it evaporate, and as it were, to vanish into *Smoak*, it becomes so subtle. We suffer it to do what ever it pleases. When 'tis upon the Wing, sometimes it flyes from East to West, from South to North, from Heaven to Earth, and as if the limits of the Universe were too narrow for it, it over-passes them, and loses its self in the innumerable Whirle-pools of *Des-Cartes*. And no more can it contain it self within the bounds of *Time*, it flyes to Eternity, and asks what it is; It would know what *was* when there was no *thing*. If it keeps its self within this World amidst the great space, it curvets over all Beings, it swims over all Matter, and the compounds of it differently modified, and yet penetrates none of them: And, as if the prodigious Mass of Creatures did not furnish Imployment enough to its Actions, it labours in the production, or rather *creation* of Beings of its own forming; It imagines Chimeras, Phantomes: it makes Mountains of Gold, Worlds in the Moon, Centaurs, and Hippogryphicks.

And these motions for the most part are of such quick dispatch, that in a quarter of an hours rambling we find our selves so far off, that the greatest Parted man in the World could never ghess by our last thought, what was the first. And after this shall we ask, from whence come those aberrations of our heart in the duties and exercises of Piety? can we expect that a Soul accustomed to wander, can fix and arrest it self all at once? It is an Horse that has not as yet received the Bitt: it does nothing night or day but kick and skip up and down in the Meadows. When one would put the Saddle upon the back, or the Rein in the mouth, it flyes out and struggles, it throws down him that gets up, and returns from whence it came. When we would gather our selves together, it dissipates its self like a Flame; it abandons us; it breaks the Rein of Piety, and before that we espy the first ways it took, we find it plunged in the diversity of its vain thoughts. St. *Augustine* acknowledges, that this is the cause of our Distractions *When our mind is full'd with these Phantasms*, says he, *and that incessantly it carries along with it an infinite number of vain thoughts, thence it comes to pass, that our Prayers are oftentimes troubled and interrupted thereby; and that when being in thy presence, O God, we indeavour to make thee hear the voice of our heart. An action of such importance is frequently traversed by frivolous Imaginations, which come from I know not whence, to break into the crowd in our minds.*

If we did well comprize the nature of Evil, we might easily conceive the Remedy. Evils ought to be cured by their contraries: So that let us learn to give bounds to our imagination, and not permit it to go so far, that we may have the less trouble to bring it back again: That is to say, For the disposing our heart to Devotion, we ought to accustom our mind to think a little of things and of good things: 'tis a Mercury, that must fix it self in being applied to Silver or Gold, 'tis a lively faculty, where-

whereto we must give the Bridle and the Rein. But let us not imagine that the secret to cure this Mal of the Soul, consists in retaining our mind in a *priv* of all thought: this is not profitable to Nature nor us to Grace. The imagination of man is too active; 'tis possible to hold it from doing nothing: 'tis to bri Death upon it to leave it without imployment; it lives no longer than it acts. God hath not give such noble faculties to bury them in an inglorious shameful Idleness. In short, a mind that is habitua to think on nothing, would nevertheless find it as m trouble to fix it self upon the works of Piety, as would to withdraw it from its ramblings and cou that it formerly used.

From all which I conclude, that the imploym of letter'd and knowing men, are perhaps the most structive to Devotion as any that are in the World. Eye is scarce ever weary with seeing, nor the with hearing; and we are so far from counting this mong Defects, that we reckon it a great Vertue. Un favour to those *Great Names* of Sciences, of fine kno ledges, of curious Researches, of Sublime Speculatio of miraculous Discoveries, there is established in World a method to mince the Soul, and almost infinit to *subdivide* it without Remedy; would to God ex rience did not give us proofs of the Truth: But very certain and very well known, that Atheists not to be found in the croud of the common Peop The *Epicures*, the *Protagoras*'s and *Diagoras*'s were kno ing men of great Wit. The thing is past into a Pr verb: And they say, that they, who by reason of Art, whereof they make profession, are obliged study Nature, and the second Causes very much, do themselves so strongly thereto, that they forget to asc to the first Cause. These men so well read in An quity, and that make so great a noise in the *Comm*

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ealth of Learning for their knowledge, make none at
ll in the Chnrch for their great Devotion. The ſtudy
nly of heavenly things can inſpire an habit of Piety:
e alſo ſee enow great Divines continue bad Chriſtians,
ecauſe they refer not their Labours to God, nor to his
lory; all their induſtry is for themſelves, and they
e the end of all their own watchings. I would never
erefore adviſe him that has a mind to be very devout,
imbrace ſo many things, nor to fill his head with
onjectures, and his memory with theſe *May-bees*,
hereof thoſe rare Sciences, ſo called, are compoſed: eſides, that this Acquiſition brings in a habit of ſelf-nceited Pride, and ſurly Scorn, a great enemy to e Spirit of Devotion, and it puts the *Virtuoſos* up ith *Pyrrhoniſm* and Doubt, which from Philoſophy aſſes into Divinity. And whereas ſome find nothing rtain in humane Sciences, they take the ſame liberty doubt of Divine Revelations. We accuſtom our ves to judge of things according to the light of Reaſon, to condemn whatever does not agree with it: d we are raſh enough to introduce that Principle o the Church, which ought to have been left in the hools. I do not ſay this, as if I would be the ad-cate of Ignorance: ſeeing we are Citizens of the orld, it is allowed us to inquire a little of what is done re: But the *Author* of Nature, whereof we make a t, makes us ſee plainly with what diſcretion and iſedneſs we ought to advance in the Diſcovery of Secrets. He has not ſhewn us but the Effects, and hid from us almoſt all the Cauſes: which teaches hat we may eaſily be without theſe knowledges, by ſon that hidden things are not for us. I know not too, ether a little Ignorance would not make more for Glory of our Creator. If we underſtood Nature well as we would underſtand it, perhaps we ſhould e the leſs Admiration for its great Author: for,

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as they say, Admiration is the Daughter of Ignora
and it is certain that we get an habit of not admi
the fineſt and moſt wonderful things becauſe we ſee
and are over-acquainted with them.

The deſire of Knowledge deceives us; but le
guard our ſelves from its ſurpriſes: our firſt Parens
ſted the effects on't ſufficiently for their liquoriſh
kering after an equal knowledge of Good and Evil
the Gods. When they were in a good ſtate,
knew not even if they were naked, and they acqui
not this knowledge with the reſt, but in the loſs o
Innocence. Only the knowledge of God ought to b
ſubject matter and end of our labours, and this is imp
ment enough for our whole life. *Bleſſed is he that k*
thee, ſays *St. Auſtin, though he knows nothing elſe: and w*
ed is that creature that knows every thing wi
knowing thee. But he who knows thee and every
elſe, is happy, not becauſe he knows thoſe other things
becauſe he knows thee. Run not therefore, O my
after thoſe vain ſhadows of Science, or if thou ru
after them, let it be as after ſhadows without *fix*
and without Love. Fix thy ſelf only to the co
plation of thy God, he is an admirable object, he
finitely greater than all the Creatures together.
vertheleſs this vaſt Object will not cauſe that *Diſſi*
ſo inſeparable from the contemplation of the Crea
It is infinite, but contracts it ſelf in a point; I
Sun that re-unites all its rayes in the bottom o
Heart to fill it both with Light and Flame: *Let t*
vout Soul, ſays *St.* Baſil, *be a Mirror and a pure*
that it may not receive the Image of any thing but i
vine Spouſe. Let it continue wholly imployed and
up by this Image, ſo as foreign things approaching nigh
not find a place there to paint and contemplate them
Thou eternal Star, ſaith another, *who art the So*
all created Lights, pierce thorough my heart with

thy beams, which may purifie me, and make me glad, which may illuminate and quicken my Soul to unite all its power to thee. If we do ſome violence to our mind to faſten it upon this one and ſole Object, we ſhall find the good we expect and ſeek after, it being a remedy againſt our indevout Diſtractions. When we have a long time held this ſlippery and evaporate Soul in the Chains of Divine Meditation, it will become more ſtayed and weighty: It will not eſcape us with ſo much eaſe: and as in flying us, it does not take its flight but in its known Roads, and ſtumbles only on the Ideas that are familiar with it, whilſt that divers thoughts will become eſtranged from it by the little Commerce it will have with them, it will not eaſily be able to get away.

Meditation.

HOW little do men know themſelves, or the extent of their Mind, to embrace ſo many Objects at once? Do thou, O my Soul, become wiſe by the faults of thy Neighbours: Thou haſt enough wherewith to buſie thy ſelf in the Contemplation of thy God. Labour to know him only; and if thou aimſt to know other things, do it in ſuch a ſort, as that all other Knowledge may conduct thee to the Knowledge of thy God. Vain is thy hope to joyn the Knowledge of the World with that of Heaven: Thy Heart is already too little for that God that is infinite, and for that Object, which hath no

no bounds: and if once thou ſuffereſt thy ſelf to be employed in the Images of all the Creatures, where wilt thou find room for God's Image? The Eyes of Owls, being accuſtomed to darkneſs, cannot endure the brightneſs and ſplendour of the Sun. A Mind always taken up in the contemplation of bodily things, cannot ſuſtain the brightneſs of that Being of Beings, of that pure Spirit, that ſhines with ſo great a luſtre

Prayer.

O Inviſible and glorious Sun, that diſcovereſt not thy beauties, but to Souls purified from the vain Images of the World, cleanſe my Soul by the purity of thy Beams, chaſe away that Darkneſs that blinds my Eyes; And from my Imagination baniſh the vain Fantoms, which hinder me from contemplating ſolely the pure Lights of thy Truth. I know thee, O my God, becauſe it has pleaſed thee to reveal thy ſelf unto me: But what is it that I know of thy Greatneſs, in compariſon of what is really and what may be known of it? I ſee the obſcurity; I form to my ſelf an Idea of thy Eſſence and Majeſty, which ſinks infinitely below thy very ſelf. I do thee this wrong, O my God, yet I am not blameworthy, for I cannnot do otherwiſe. I ask thee forgiveneſs, I am very ſenſible, I do not know thee as thou art: The rather the fault of my Mind than of my Heart. Purify mine Eyes, that I may behold thee which as vigourous an Aſpect as that of an Eagle, which looks upon the Sun. Let the Knowledge of thy Beauty charm me, and fill me in ſuch ſort as that I may conceive an holy diſtaſte for all that is called in the World rare Knowledge, and great Literature

Let me not ſcatter my ſelf in the circumference: Let all my looks be toward thee, who art the Center, from whence flows all the Beauty and Truth in the World. Let me but ſee thee, and in ſeeing thee ſhall I ſee all that can be ſeen. Let my Soul rally and recollect it ſelf upon this Object only that it may penetrate it, if it be poſſible. O God aid me in this deſign, make thy ſelf viſible, make me to enter into the bottom of thy Myſteries and into the ſecrets of thy infinite Wiſdome; that I may ſlight and deſpiſe as unworthy of mee all the curious ſciences, whereof the men of the Age make ſo great a Myſtery.

CHAP. VII.

The Rareneſs and interruption of holy Exerciſes: The laſt Source of Indevotion.

THE foregoing Obſtacles, I confeſs, are very ſtrong, and the love of the World, its Pleaſures, its Troubles, its Employments, and the Ramblings of the Mind are ſuch evils, as are hard to be remedied: But nevertheleſs I believe, that we may come to an end in labouring about them with much care and aſſiduity; For the moſt evident Cauſe of our Indevotion is the ſeldomneſs and Interruption of holy Exerciſes. Certain it is, that ſpiritual Pleaſures are *diametrically* oppoſite to carnal ones. The rareneſs only and the difficulty render theſe brisk and eager. The taſt of Pleaſure we loſe amidſt Delights: And aſſoon as the Pleaſures of the World have loſt the Grace of Novelty, they have loſt their value. Yeſterday a Begger counted himſelf happy with a ſmall ſum; To day he finds a greater; And to morrow he will be no more ſenſible of his felicity. If great Repaſts be made at a pretty diſtance of time from

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one another, the pleaſure of the Debauch will be ſomething to you; return to 'em every day, ſeeing that this will be called an *Ordinary*, the pleaſure of feaſting will quite ceaſe, but on the other ſide return often to God reiterate your commerces with him; and ſure I am, what appeared at the beginning unſavoury, will become a pleaſurable exerciſe. But if you do this rarely, you will immediately loſe the taſte. The reaſon of this myſtery is not difficult to be diſcovered: It is, becauſe Piety and its exerciſes are by us eſteemed Labours, by reaſon of the criminal diſpoſitions which Sin brings us. Now labour evermore is diminiſhing according to the meaſure wherein we continue it. The Traveler is weary at the end of his firſt days *Journey*; on the morrow he will be much leſs: before two days are over, his Journey will be a mighty trouble to him, but ſuch an one as will have proportion to his ſtrength, and in few Weeks it will become to him a divertiſement. By violence at firſt we bring our Soul to God: it follows with uneaſineſs: It thinks the way uneven, ſharp and craggy, but by little and little this Travel ceaſes to be a pain, and bleſſedly changes it ſelf into pleaſure. Is it not true, that the leſs we do a thing we do it not ſo well? The Vertues are habits; and tho Heaven beſtow 'em upon us by powring them within our Souls, it notwithſtanding gives us them much in the ſame manner as we acquire them by divers reiterateed actions. Wherefore as no one is a Good Souldier for his having been in one Campaign, nor a Painter for his having had two or three Leſſons; So the Devout do not become ſo by one or two actions of Piety, but by long and frequent exerciſes. This is a Warr; wherein we have to fight againſt our thoughts, againſt the hardneſs of our own thick, Icy heart: At the firſt and ſecond rencounter, we are beaten oftentimes; ſo that at all hours we muſt return to the charge. Indevotion is a mon-

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ſter, which we are oblig'd to mortifie by little and little, for that we cannot kill it all at once. To day we ought to get one foot of it and to morrow another; but if we let it get breath never ſo little, it will ſoon regain what it had loſt. When we ſhall have come to deſtroy it almoſt intirely, let us not imagin, that Aſſiduity will be the leſs neceſſary: For if the rareneſs of devout exerciſes hinders their progreſs, let Devotion be never ſo much advanc'd, the interruption and relaxation will deſtroy it. We may underſtand an art perfectly well, but if we don't exerciſe it, it is forgot. Above all, when we fight againſt our own inclinations, for a little abandoning them to their Bent, we ſhall find 'em again in the place, from whence we removed them. Our heart hath ſuch a ſlopeneſs towards Sin as one can't imagin, and *eſpecially* towards Indevotion. Let it be fortified with the beſt *habits* in the World, and let it be thoroughly confirmed in them, yet one inflaming thought coming acroſs preſently will ſet it all on fire, and choak the flames of Devotion by thoſe of concupiſcence. If the heart be ſo eaſy to be burnt by the fire of Sin, it is, on the contrary, very heavy and cold as to Devotion; inſomuch as after having been lifted up to Heaven by *Machines* and great ſtruglings, the interruption of a few days will ſpoil all, and bring it down again to its old Earth. To prove this truth, I deſire nothing but the teſtimony of ſincere Souls. If ſome wordly Affairs, and ſome hinderances, to which you have given the name of unavoidable, have eſtranged you for ſometime from the place of religious worſhip, and have made you loſe your Cloſet-hours: at firſt this you doe with ſome ſort of pain, but inſenſibly you accuſtom your ſelves to it; and when you would return to the practiſe of Devotion and the exerciſe of Prayer, you do not know your ſelves any longer, and you feel an inconceivable heavineſs in your ſelves.

The Conſcience reſembles the Stomach; ceaſe to give it meat, and after much abſtinence, it will ceaſe to ask it: Do but ſtay a little longer, and if you give it food, it will not know what to do with it; it cannot now digeſt it; it has loſt all its natural heat; its forces are quite ſpent; and doing no more of its wonted Offices, it will leave the body for Food to Worms. So the Conſcience loſes an habit of Devotion by ceaſing from its works, and the Soul dies in its crimes and Sins. In ſhort, Devotion is a Virtue, that puts all the faculties of our Souls into motion, as one Spring makes all the reſt in a Clock to move. Wind up this Clock without diſcontinuance, 'twill all go eaſily: but if you ceaſe the Wheels will ruſt, all will become heavy and mightily unfit for movement. Let the exerciſes of Piety be conſtantly going on, and the Soul will conſerve a Diſpoſition to devout motions: if they be interrupted, it will bring a naſtineſs into all the parts of the Soul, which will deprive it of an eaſineſs to move towards Heaven.

Theſe are the Sources of our Indevotion, and the Indiſpoſitions of Soul, which we ought to heal, to open unto us a way to this excellent Virtue. Others too we may find of them, but they will caſt us into two general conſiderations. As for example: Who can doubt, that the languiſhings of our Soul do not proceed from the weakneſs of our Faith, Hope, or Charity? If we were ſtrongly perſuaded that there is a God in Heaven that knows our thoughts and conſiders all our ways, that is called King of Men and Angels, opening Hell and Paradice, ſhould we not preſent our ſelves before him with a Spirit of due dread and ſubmiſſion? But alaſs! we believe after ſuch a manner, as God hath need to help our unbelief. To be devout we need only become *Faithful*: and therefore the Fathers found no counſel more uſeful to guard us from Diſtractions

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than this *To remember him to whom we speak.* Can we doubt also, that our slackness does not come from the little love we have for God. One friend does not visit another, nor a lover his mistress with such an air of negligence, as we show in Gods Service. If we were kindled with Love, all our motions would receive impressions from that heavenly fire. In a word, if the hope of glory had touch'd our hearts. we should not go so slowly to him, of whom we think to receive celestial happiness: But I know not, whether this can be counted among the Sources of Indevotion, since that the want of Faith, Hope and Charity, is Indevotion it self.

To conclude, we must confess, that we often find our selves in some certain Indispositions of Heart, whereof we can render no account nor reason; to day we are all Fire, to morrow all Ice. An upright Soul instantly pursues and awakens its self, thinks on every thing that may inflame it: It examins its own Conscience, to see, whether it hath committed any thing to disorder, its heart and grieve the spirit of Grace it finds nothing whereof it can accuse its self, and knows not from whence it hath this coldness Whence then proceed these inequalities? Perhaps from the changable nature of man, who is not always himself; and peradventure from the Temperament too as well as the disposition of the Air. As the Soul imprisoned in the Body does not act but by its Organs and depends extreamly on the motion of its humours; it's very manifest, that Devotion also depends on these dusty Springs and Wheels, whose pace is frequently seduc'd and spoyl'd. And it may be the Devil finds his time, and amidst the good seed sows his Tares, in our field. In some perhaps God's holy Spirit, the author of every good thought, has hid himself for sometime. This drought and barrenness of the Soul may proceed from that God hath lock'd up the Sources of those Waters springing up to eternal Life.

However it be, this miſchief does cauſe much trouble to devout Souls. We need not, for a cure, imploy any other remedy but Prayers and Tears. The Soul muſt ſay: Come Lord *Jeſus*, come thou Son of my Soul, diſperſe this darkneſs, make the morning Starr to riſe in mine heart. Why doſt thou hide thy ſelf? I have ſought thee in the night and found thee not. Open thy fountains, and make thy Rivers of Water to flow on me, that I may quench my thirſt and be refreſhed: make haſte, O God of my Salvation.

Meditation.

WHAT Negligence is this, I find in my ſelf? I take a great deal of pains to do all things well, which reſpect the preſent Life; but I take very little care of doing the only and main thing well, for which I ought to Labour. To make a progreſs in an Art, I exerciſe it often: I conſult Maſters, I make reflection on my Faults, that I may not fall into 'em again. But alaſs! my Soul, thou doſt not uſe thy ſelf ſo in the Exerciſes of Devotion. Very rarely it is, thou doſt them; And frequently without Reflection, and therefore thou doſt them ill. Thou doſt them rarely, becauſe thou doſt them without Pleaſure: And thou doſt them without any good, becauſe thou doſt them in a careleſs Faſhion and not with thy whole Bent of Heart. Return to 'em often, and thou ſhalt find ſuch Delights

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in them as the Heart of Man cannot conceive.

Prayer.

O my God, my divine Saviour, open the fountains of thy Grace, and let Rivers flow upon me. Make me sensible of the advantage of possessing thee, and the pleasures of enjoying thee; so that I may not draw my self both seldom and difficultly to the places, where thou speakest to me and I to thee in thy Temple, or in the retreat of my Closet. Draw me that I may run after thee. When I design to approach thee by the actions of my Devotion, be not thou far from me. I know I am unworthy thou should'st come under my Roof. 'Tis not long since mine heart was a den of Thieves and the haunt of unclean spirits: but these filthy Guests have left some remainder of Impurities behind them, which render this Tabernacle unworthy of thy Holiness. Nevertheless, thou Sun of my Soul, whose rayes cannot be soil'd nor defil'd by the impurity of the places through which they pass, pierce even to my Marrow, put thy Fire within me, which may purge me, and kindle me with the flames of thy Love. If I sleep in security, awaken me; if I tumble into neglect, and happen to break

off the holy exerciſes of Piety, ſo neceſſary to conſerve Devotion, knock at the Door of my heart, to make me vigilant and watchful: and if the hammer of thy word be not ſufficient, ſpare not even that of Afflictions. Rent me in pieces rather than leave me in my own natural hardneſs: for thy blows will not wound my head; they will be to me ſweeter than Balm. Come to my help, O my redeemer, to accompliſh the victory over my Infirmities. I am heavy and *material*; make me ſpiritual and heavenly. *The motions of Grace and of Devotion which lift me up on high, are oppoſite to* the motions of Nature, that pull me down: In this *Duel* toſt I am *grievouſly and turmoild betwixt two contraries. Nature hath the Inſolence to oppoſe Grace, and this Combat makes the exerciſes of my Devotion to be ſo few: But render them, O holy Spirit eaſy and pleaſant to me, that I may return to them frequently.*

PART.

PART III.

CHAP. I.

That Pleaſure is the mortal enemy of Devotion: what are the Sentiments and maximes of the world about Pleaſure and Voluptuoſneſs.

WE have examined the Sources of Indevotion, and have indeavoured to ſtop and ſtem them. But among all the reſt one there is, more lively, more green, and more abounding in Impurites, and by conſequence more an enemy to Piety; and that *is the Spirit of the World*: and after having well thought on't we find, that this Spirit of the World is the love of pleaſure and ſenſual voluptuouſneſs. Experience lets us ſee, that this Spirit is ſuch an enemy to Devotion, as 'tis impoſſible to be animated with it and to be Devout. This perpetual uſe of ſenſual Pleaſures does fix the Soul ſo ſtrongly to Matter, as it becomes incapable of any Elevation. The more we have of union with ſenſible things, the more we are diſunited from God. We ought therefore to turn, on this ſide, our greateſt induſtry and indeavours, to ſtrive to bring the Soul back to God, and make that ſtrong application ceaſe, it hath for Material things; ſo as it may lean and adhere to God; and imploy its ſelf about him. Upon which

which account, although the overgreat sensibility we have of earthly pleasures, has had its *Chapter* above, among the other Sources of Indevotion, we believe we have not sayd enough upon so great and so important a Subject. This is a monster too redoutable to be beat and quell'd by the By and with so much negligence. If we could get rid of that we should gain all; but if it continue the Master, it's in vain we strive to become devout. And therefore I destin'd this *third part* to make such considerations therein, as may, if possible, ruine that grand Enemy of Devotion. Certain it is, Man was born for Pleasure, since he was created to be happy; and happiness consists in the Possession of Good, and the sense of that Possession makes Pleasure. The sovereign good of man consists in the Sole possession and absolute fruition of God, and in being united immediately and after a most intimate manner unto him. And Pleasure ought to spring from this strict and close Union with the Divinity. This Union is made by *Knowledge* and by *Love*; and pleasure arises from thence, that God applies himself to the Soul by infolding it in the Arms of his goodness and Beauty, and that he fills it with the light and joy of his countenance. *Sin* has so far infeebled this Union of our Soul with God, that it hath no more sense of its pleasures; *Your Sins have put a seperation between you and your God:* and it is like a thick cloud that eclipses the Sun as to us. Whose comfortable beams would raise so much joy within us. The Soul has kept this sentiment, that it was born for Joy and Pleasure: insomuch as being disunited from its God, it intirely turns its self to the Body and its Pleasures; and the stricter it is united to these, the farther off it is from them. The ligament of this union o'th' Soul to the body is Corporal Pleasure: and proportionably as this pleasure tyes the Soul to the Body, so it disunites it from God: so that sensual pleasures cause

cauſe this Diſunion: and this Diſunion is propperly Indevotion which we would *deſtroy*: for moſt aſſuredly Devotion is that motion of the Soul whereby ſhe returns to her *Principle* and to the fruition of thoſe pleaſures, that ſpring from her union with God. Let worldly people take the pains to conſult their own heart, and that will tell them what we are about to ſay: They well perceive that the reaſon why they cannot diſpoſe themſelves to Prayer, to the love and Service of God, is, becauſe they are poſſes'd by their paſſions, and inchanted by the deluſions of Senſe: *That is to ſay*, they are abſolutely turned toward ſenſual pleaſures, and wholly taken up in them. The Soul is pinch'd and contracted, the mind is bounded when its full of the World and its vanities; ſo that we need not wonder if God who will have the Soul intire, find no room therein.

Indeed, a very difficult work this is, we undertake to perſuade, that thoſe, who would become Devout, ought to renounce worldly pleaſures. Although the Corruption of them be extreme we do not place all pleaſures in the ſame rank: we diſtinguiſh them into two orders. There are thoſe which are call'd exceſſes, enormities and crimes: but theſe the World *abandons*, and has not the face to defend. There are others ſtyled innocent Pleaſures, Dancing, Play, good Chear, great Meals, Feaſts, Play-houſes Shows, vain Converſations, the commerce of Gallantry, and Intrigues that are the guides to criminal Amours. The *Church* diſtinguiſhes Pleaſures, as well as the *World*; Both agree, that there are Innocent ones: But the Church puts the *greateſt* part of thoſe, which the World upholds to be innocent, into the number of criminal pleaſures.

Voluptuoſneſs is an Idol, to which the World Sacrifices, both young and old, Men and Women, Children and old Men, great and ſmall, rich and poor; all ages, both Sexes, all conditions have their Pleaſures: Inſo-

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much as if we go according to ſuffrages, we ſhould loſe the Cauſe. Eſpecially, Young men cannot indure, one ſhould take away the uſe of Pleaſure, they perſuading themſelves that youth is predeſtinately conſecrated to it. The Painters and Poets that contribute to marr and vitiate Mens minds, repreſent Voluptuouſneſs to us like a young Woman, or Man, laid upon a Bed of flowers, environed with all the Objects, which are bodily pleaſures. The Paſſions, that are wholly carnal, and have a ſtrait Aliance and Correſpondence with the Senſes, are in boiling youth: The Fleſh all brisk, active, and vigorous, having received no manner of Mortification, *Hectors* and Domineers with inſolence. Whereupon young men follow the furies of their Temper and *Craſis*: The ſentiments of Piety and the habits of Virtue are not to be found naturaly in them. So that reaſon, deſtitute of this Succour, is eaſily vanquiſh'd by the Paſſions. We may ſay alſo, that Reaſon, in this age, conſpires with the Paſſions, and ſerves only to puſh on young people into the greateſt exceſs and extravagences. After their own faſhion they reaſon, they are perſuaded, that wiſdom and prudence doe not become them. they ſay, that theſe properly belong to old men; and thus abuſe the ſaying of the *Wiſe-man*: *To every thing under the Heaven there is a ſeaſon.* If any one has more happy inclinations, he is not ſo hardy as to follow them; he is ſtricken with a criminal ſhame; he would not have himſelf markt out for a ſingular Fop, He caſt himſelf into the crowd, and lets himſelf be carried away with the ſtream: And even thoſe, who are reputed Wiſe in the World, if they dare not authorize theſe Irregularities, at leaſt they excuſe them. They are young, *ſay they*, they will come to it at length; we muſt allow ſomwehat to Age: we are not born wiſe; we were ſuch as they are; they may be one day what we are.

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But alas! we do not ſtay there; we do not renounce Pleaſures, as we leave our youthful years behind us: the love of Voluptuouſneſs is a malady we carry along with us thorough all Ages. We go as ſlow as poſſibly or (to ſpeak better) we go on not at all. Old Age and Sickneſs pull men ſometimes away by violence from Pleaſure; but we ſeldom view thoſe, that voluntarily diveſt themſelves of worldly pleaſures: This is the moſt uncommon of all Sacrifices. How many Women do we ſee that would hold out even againſt time, and foreſlow themſelves from being carried off the Stage? They forget nothing, that may contribute to conſerve the air of youthfulneſs: They would deceive Men, and I know not whether or no they hope to deceive Death it ſelf. They would evermore be the object of the Worlds care, and have a part in all its Pleaſures. When old age is come, and has lain its Characters open in their meen, they draw a Skreen before it to render it inviſible. You ſee theſe Women, Idolatreſſes of the World, to bury their head under an heap of Powder; that they may *confound* the whiteneſs of their gray hairs with this adulterated and ſtrange whiteneſs: They fill the dints and hollows of their countenances with couſening Ceruſe; they ſhadow the wrinkles of their forehead with falſe hair and paints; and, in which they are moſt prudent, they imbalm their Bodies, and cover them with Perfumes, to corrupt the ill odours that ariſe from the Carkaſſes. In this equipage they mingle themſelves in all companies: they would be ingaged in all ſorts of Pleaſures. They are ſeen in Balls and Comedies, trembling with weakneſs: they cannot ſee to diſtinguiſh red from black, nor four from two, but play they will at Cards and Dice with Spectacles. In ſum, after having been the Idols of the World, they punniſh it for the crimes they have made it commit; they become its puniſhment and its curſe. Theſe are

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the *Spectres* and Phantomes, that follow it: It flyes them and has 'em in horrour and detestation

Are men more wise than Women? Do not we see of the other old sinners, that have their members worn and wasted by Debauchery, but whose concupiscence within is as young aud boyling as ever. Their inclinations are always vitious; but their members can no more obey, as the Servants of their beastly pleasures. While I look upon these men, I represent to my self what Happiness, after the *burning* of an house: when the great fire is over we along time after see Sparkles and points of flames break out of an huge mass of Ashes; so as by this we ghess the fire is still in, and that it only wants Fuel and Matter. We may say, that these old men are now but a little heap of hot Embers, and of the Relicks of the Conflagration; but from amidst these Ashes we see the wild and sudden sparks of concupiscence jetting out one after another: whereby 'tis plain, that the love of Voluptuousness is still alive within, and the body wants only strength to act.

All men therefore hold clearly for Pleasure: They are not contented to defend it by plurality of Voices, they would maintain it by reasons: God and Nature, say they, make nothing in vain: The earth is covered with living creatures, the Sea filled with Fishes, the Air peopled with Birds, and the Universe is full of Delights. Is it possible *say they*, that God has made so many things for our use to keep us from the use of them? has the author of Nature made so many sensible Wonders to fill the Senses with illusions, and to excite criminal passions? has the finger of God writ upon every Creature *Touch me not?* At this rate the condition of Man is now very forlorn and miserable: when he was in *Paradise* he had but one Tree, whose Access was not permitted him: and lo! all the good things of the World are become so many reserved and Mortal fruits

fruits, which no one is ſuffered to touch without incurring his Death. And does this ſhew God's wiſdom and goodneſs to have placed me among ſo many objects of Temptation, if I cannot yield without ſinning? Is not there a natural Bond and connexion betwixt Love and Beauty, betwixt the deſirable things and the Deſires? And why ſhould God have made ſo many good and deſirable things if he would keep me from the injoyment and deſire of them? Alas! ſay they, Are there not enow unavoidable things, but we muſt ſeek ſuch as can be avoided and ſince worldly goods, *If they be not the rewards of the Bleſſed, yet are the comforts of the unhappy*: why will we not injoy thoſe Pleaſures which are the ſweetning refreſhments of our pains? If you take joy away from the Soul, do you not withall take Life away too? do ye not bury it alive? do you not make of mans life a ſad and gloomy night? in a word, do not you render Man the moſt miſerable of all Creatures? they ſay, Laſtly, that religion is not to ſerve not ſo horridly beſet with Thorns, as ſome would make one believe: If we aſcend even to the *Source*, we find it ſay they, more pure and more diſengaged from thoſe rigors, wherewith Superſtition; has inveſted it: the *Saints* have had their Debauches they have thank'd God, he has given them a Table cover'd with delicious meats, a full bowl, and overflowing Cup. They have ſaid, that Wine was intended to make glad the heart of man; our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Author of the true Religion had his Feaſts, and was frequently at ſuch: he was at the marriage in *Cana* of *Galilee*, and there he made excellent Wine to pleaſe the Gueſts. Thus do they plead for voluptuouſneſs, and the unhappineſs is, that theſe maximes do not obtain only in the World, they try to bring them into the Church. They have put Guides and Directours, that dreſs up a Religion of Flowers, and cry *Prepare the way; make the Paths plain.* Enlarge the ways

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and make a great road that all the World may come into it: Theſe make our Devotions eaſy, and they cry; *My Yoke is eaſy and my burthen light.* Love renders the Yoke of our Lord eaſy, for it is altogether ſweet and eaſy to him that loves: but theſe ill Doctors render their yoke eaſy in diſpenſing with the love of God and permitting the Love of the World and the ſearch after pleaſing the Senſes. And this is the reaſon why both in the Church and in the World there are ſo few Devout becauſe there are ſo many voluptuous perſons.

Meditation.

ALas, what a wretched Creature I am! I do not the good I would, but the evil I would not, that do I. I underſtand well the ſtrength of Reaſons on Piety's ſide, that call upon me to renounce the vain pleaſures of the Earth: The weakneſs, I perceive, in the reaſonings of the advocates of Pleaſure. But thoſe good reaſons of Piety find the Gate lockt; For that my Heart revolts againſt them; and the bad reaſons, that maintain the uſe of ſenſuality, enter eaſily, ſince they are allyed to the Corruption of my Heart. My Fleſh is loath to find the Reaſons of Piety ſo ſtrong: it had rather thoſe for voluptuouſneſs were the better: And on the other part my Mind is troubled while it ſees the force of truth, to perceive in it that reſiſtance againſt being overcome.

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I ſeriouſly bemoan this, that in viewing the weakneſs of Reaſons, which draw me on Pleaſure's ſide, yet nevertheleſs I ſhould ſuffer my ſelf to be carryed away, as if they were very ſtrong: for when all is done, Piety and Reaſon may joyn their forces, but it is Paſſion becomes victorious. O my Soul, thou idolatrizeſt ſenſuality; thou mayeſt indeed change place, but thy Gods thou ever carryeſt along with thee. If thou renounceſt ſome Pleaſure, thou doſt not quit thy Idols, thou doſt nought, but change: for the Love of Pleaſure finds the means to loſe nothing: when one object is taken away from it, it ſtraight caſts its ſelf upon another. Judge then, of what nature can thy Devotions be, ſeeing thou divideſt 'em alwayes between this Idol and the true God? Take one ſide, O my Soul chooſe and take that good part, which ſhall not be taken away from thee: thou canſt not ſerve two maſters, the World and God. It may be thou bleſſeſt thy ſelf in that thou haſt forſaken the Pleaſures of Youth, in that thou loveſt not Play, nor Balls, nor Comedyes any more. But thou doſt not percieve, that thy Corruption tyes thee to other Objects, and thou art alwayes the ſlave of thy Paſſions and the drudge to thy

thy senses. In thy youth thou tookest pleasure to throw mony away, but now thou makest it a pleasure to get and hoard it up: And what difference is there betwixt these two pleasures? Are not they both pleasures of Sence, and have they not both the same Source? do not they produce the same effect and estrange thee from thy God? hath a young brisk man, in giving himself up to sensual pleasure, any reason to think he deserves very highly, because he does not now play at push-pin, as he did in his child-hood? Every age of life has its Passions and its Pleasures. But all are enemies to Piety and Devotion. Be not therefore in pain to know what makes thee sleep at Sermon; 'tis the Devil of voluptuousness that rocks thee asleep when thou ceasest to be attentive in thy prayers, it is he, who gets thy Ear and carries it elsewhere: And thy Insensibility, as to pleasure in the presence of thy God, who unites himself immediately to thee, proceeds from thence, that thou art buried in matter, and that being intirely turned towards corporal things, thou believest nothing *Real* but what strikes the sense, and thou ownest no true pleasure but what comes from sensible things. Reenter then, o my Soul, reenter

enter into thy ſelf, ſuffer not any longer bodily objects to blot out the very ſight of thy *Spirit:* Search after the preſence of thy God: Hear his eternal wiſdom, which ſpeaks to thee within thy heart: Reſiſt the efforts the body makes to deſtroy thee. Truſt not the report of thy ſenſes: What they preſent thee, take 'em not for true pleaſures. Regard not the things thou ſeeſt, as worthy of thy application and eſteem: leave thy ſelf to be filled with God, and to be intirely taken up by him: And if thou applyeſt thy ſelf to him he will apply himſelf to thee; and from this mutual application between thy Soul and thy God, there will ariſe to thee ſuch vaſt pleaſures, as thy Imagination can never be capable to conceive.

Prayer.

MY Lord and my God, what ſhall I render unto thee for ſo many Benefits, and how ſhall I do to atone for ſo many Ingratitudes? Behold thou haſt plac'd me in a Paradiſe; where all ſorts of good things abound, and thou haſt given me the uſe of all I ſee. Thou haſt made ſenſible Creatures, that they may have accord and coreſpondence with my ſenſes, and

that

that they may be an help unto me to lift me up to things Intellectual. But thorow my corruption they are become Snares and Sins unto me. I do not serve my self of these visible Creatures to ascend to the invisible: I use them to go downwards within my self: I wrap my self up in matter, there I stick; and I bury my self in corporeal things. Thus I make my Mind the slave of my Body: Heaven, Earth, Air and Sea are full of objects, which should aid me to know, admire, and praise thee, but I use them to offend thee. All is full of such things as flatter the flesh, and raise sensual pleasures. But o my God! thou dist make them with intent I should not seek after sensible pleasures in them, and overwhelm my self in carnal voluptuousness through thy profound wisdom and infinite power thou hast made Fishes in the Sea, Fowls in the Air, living Creatures on Earth, Plants and diverse kind of Fruits, the most delicious Liquours; and all this for the taste; Perfumes for the smell; Beauties for the sight; harmonious sounds for the Ears, and diverse pleasuers for Touching. I am sure, O my God, thou hast made this to save me, and not to damn me: If I had continued innocent and in the state, wherein thou createst me, I could not have abused so many goods in possessing them; I should have made

made such use of them, as would not have abased my mind to sensible things, in seperateing mee from thee, to whom I should become perfectly united. But now the Devil has spread his nets among all thy Creatures; he has fixt temptations to all the objects of my Senses. Thou therefore seest me o my God, environed with Tempters on all sides: I cannot open mine Eyes nor Ears, but some Image arrives, that awakens my besotted Imagination, and foments my Concupiscence. O my Saviour, be pleased to guard my Heart. Make me vanquish all these temptations: Give me the grace to reclame and refer thy Creatures to their proper use, that I may not abuse them in voluptuousness; That the Knowledg of them may serve me to admire thy Power and Praise thy Wisdom; That from these bodily Images I may draw spiritual Ideas; so that I may find in all things wherefore to glorifie thee, and my Spirit may return more and more to thee, O eternal, infinite Spirit, which art the Father of Spirits.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

That the Pleaſures of the Senſes, neither in their Uſe, nor in their Abuſe, do agree with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity and Devotion.

I Know very well, that this Maxime muſt appear ſtrange to the greateſt part of Mankind, eſpecially to them who are foreſtalled by thoſe Principles which we have examined in the former Chapter. The Maximes of the Church are as oppoſite to thoſe of the World as Light to Darkneſs: The World authorizes all the Pleaſures of Senſe, the Church condemns almoſt all. We do not here draw up a proceſs ſimply againſt thoſe debaucht People, whoſe name is odious even in the Ears of the World: We condemn thoſe, that repute themſelves honeſt Perſons, who, in effect, have ſome degree of moral honeſty, and whoſe life is ſhelter'd from the ſeverity of laws, but who conſume and ſpend their life in the uſe of vain, worldly pleaſures. All thoſe Pleaſures, that ſome believe Innocent are Enemies to Devotion, and wholy diſagree with the Spirit of Chriſtianity, as well in their uſe as in their abuſe. Now if we cannot render this Truth victorious by plurality of Suffrages, at leaſt wee will endeavour to render it evident by ſtrength of Reaſons.

And firſt of all, let us hear our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* ſpeaking from on high: For where can we better find the Spirit of Chriſtianity than in *Chriſt* himſelf? Let us hear him painting out the way to us that leads to life. *Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to Deſtruction, and many there be, which go in thereat. But ſtrait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. If thou wouldeſt be perfect, go ſell all that thou haſt, and follow me.*

If any one would come unto me, let him take up his Cross and follow me. If thy right Eye, or right Hand offend thee, pluck them [*off*] *and cast them from thee. Blessed are the poor: Blessed are they, which hunger and thirst: Blessed are they that mourn and are persecuted.* The Disciples follow their Master, and tell us likewise: *Mortifie your Members, which are upon the Earth. If any one love the World, the love of the Father abideth not in him. Be ye sober and watch: Conform not your selves to this present wicked World. As Strangers and Pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts. Have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of Darkeness: Make not the Temples of the Holy Ghost the members of an Harlot. The Mind of the Prophets was not different from that of the Apostles, for they speak after this manner: Go to now, I said of Mirth, it is vanity, and of Laughter, it is madness. It is better* for a young man *to go to the House of mourning, than to go to the House of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and* the living *will lay it to Heart. It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. I said in my Heart, I will prove thee with Mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure; And behold this also is vanity. Rejoyce O young man in the days of thy youth: but know that for all* [*these*] *things God will bring thee unto Judgment.* And now, in good earnest, are all these draughts of the Character of us *Christians* now a dayes? These Crosses, these Thorns, these rough Wayes, these strait Gates, this Yoke, this renouncing the World and its Vanities, do they signifie that we can follow our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the equipage of Sensuality, sometimes among Feasts, sometimes Dancings, sometimes at Comedies, and sometimes at Play? Those soft and effeminate Lives, that are spent at Cards and Dice, in vain and lewd Conversations, in the intrigues of fleshly love, have they any resemblance with the combates, the wrastlings, the races, from which the H. Spirit takes his emblems to paint out to us the Life of the Faithful? *Fight the good fight of Faith, and so run, that ye may obtain the*

the prize. Keep under your Body and bring it into ſubjection. So fight not as one that beateth the Air. Heaven and Earth, Life and Death, are not more oppoſite to one another, than the Effiminate life of us Chriſtians to this pourtraict of the Life of the Faithful which the holy Ghoſt hath given us.

But above all let us remember, that the Spirit of Chriſtianity and of Devotion loves nothing ſo much as Mortification, to which ſenſible Pleaſures are mortal enemies *Mortifie your members which are upon the Earth*, St. *Paul* bids us: do they mortifie their Members, that entertain and imploy them in Voluptuouſneſs in lying upon Beds of Down, in pillaging Sea and Land to furniſh them with delicate Meats, in joyning Art to Nature to compoſe delicious Liquors for them, and in running after all that may enchant their Senſes? Some will ſay, that by theſe Members, whereof the Goſpel commnads the Mortification, we ought to underſtand Vices. Very well: But doe not we know that the Members of the Body are the origine of the members of that *Old Man*, which makes Vices? we cannot kill Vice, but by mortifying our members. The fleſh is that unhappy Field accurſed by God which produces Thorns and Thiſtles: the more you fatten this Earth, the more will it produce of thoſe venemous Plants. So that we are obliged to keep it in a great *Privation* of thoſe Pleaſures, that foment concupiſence, to the end it may continue mighty barren in reſpect of thoſe unhappy Products.

The Spirit of *Chriſtianity* and of Devotion is a Spirit of ſtrength; but pleaſure is ſoft: It ſoftens the Soul, and effeminates the courage: and the Church requires a vigorous Soul, and an heart of a Temper, which cannot be wounded by the moſt weighty blows; nor the moſt edged and hacking gleaves of the Churches Enemies. We are to march thorough an hundred and an han-

dred sharp Swords: He that would follow the Truth of *Jesus Christ* ought to resolve to suffer Persecution, since we have alwayes, in our head, the Devil and the World. But can a soft and voluptuous Life be proper to dispose us to Martyrdom? In going out of a perfumed Bed, in rising from a Table almost weigh'd down with delicious meats, with an head fill'd with the fumes of a debauch; are we in a good state to mount Scaffolds, to enter into Flames, and, without quaking, look upon Racks and Tortures? whether is it more reasonable to look for the *Heroes* of *Jesus Christ*, capable of facing Death it self, among our *Christians*, that overwhelm and (as it were) fuddle themselves in pleasures, or among those, whose austere and retired Life has declared War to all the pleasures of the World? But, says one, we are not called to Martyrdom, and according to all appearances we shall never be. It may be so: but still it is of great importance, we should alwayes have the necessary Disposition to suffer Martyrdom. For *God will judge us not only according to what we do, but also according to what we would do.* Furthermore, does any one believe, that the Sword and Fire of the Persecutors of the Church are the most dangerous of all Temptations? we imagine, we have need of strength and courage only to vanquish or undergo such torments. But alas! Some who have come off victorious from their bloody Battels, have yet fallen into the snares of the Devil; and some that have born the marks and brands of the *Lord Jesus*, have become children of Hell, by letting 'emselves be surpriz'd by the Devil of Pride, Covetousness, Uncleanness, or Heresie. Such an one who had torn a young Lion to pieces in his strength, broken the bands of the *Philistines* and pil'd heaps of dead bodies with the jaw-bone of an Ass, falls into the bracelers of a *Dalilah*, and is lead in her chains to an Idol Temple: This truth the World is not ignorant of. It was

well ſaid, that the Delights of *Capua* did more than the ſword of the *Romans*, and that they found out the way to ſoften and break thoſe hard *Africans*, that march'd after *Hannibal*, and made victory to march after them. So the Tranquillity, God beſtows on us, ought not to make us ſleep in the Arms of Voluptuouſneſs: Proſperity is a ſtrong Temptation, and pleaſure it ſelf is a Monſter, which we cannot overcome without a vigorous Reſiſtance.

Meditation.

I Am reading a maxime, that makes me tremble. *God will judg us both according to what we do, and according to what we would have done, if we had bin expoſed to thoſe Temptations which may fall out in the Providence of God.* True it is, there is ſcarce room for doubt in this maxime. And it's certain, that my God would have the higheſt purity of Heart; that no one is innocent in his ſight, becauſe he has committed no evil, but becauſe he has not the inclination to commit it. He ſounds the depths of the Heart, and ſearcheth the Reins, and he will judg according to what he knows, and not to what men ſee. In my heart he ſees crimes in their very buds: And if theſe ſins have not ſhot forth by reaſon of want of Earth, if they have not come forth for want of Occaſion and Opportunity, I am therefore

therefore the more innocent; But on the other ſide alſo, who can undergoe the Terrour and Amazment that ſuch a thought inſpires? I may be then puniſht for a thouſand crimes I never committed. So that it will be uſeleſs to me not to find in my life either Paricides, or Sacrileges, or Adulteries, or Idolatries, or Apoſtaſies, ſince that I might have the ſeeds of them in my heart, and might have fallen into them, if I had been tempted and puſht on that awayes. I muſt therefore give up mine Account before God. O my heart, canſt thou anſwer for thy ſelf? Thou art profoundly, and it may be deſperately wicked, who knows thee? Canſt thou ſay with a perfect confidence; Although I ſaw the beauty of *Bathſheba*, I would never fall into the ſnares of Incontinence with *David*? If I were tempted as *Solomon*, I would never become an Idolater, as he did? If I ſaw preſent death, I would never deny my Maſter with St. *Peter*? If theſe pillars were ſhook and broken, what aſſurance canſt thou have of reſiſting theſe winds, nay *Hurricanes* of Temptation, thou who art but a broken Reed? And if I muſt be judged for all the crimes I could commit, what will become of me, what ſhall I do, whither ſhall I

turn my self, since till this present minute, I cannot give an account of the sins which I have commited? Think thus for thy comfort, O my Soul, that if thou art capable, of thy self, to fall into sins of surprize, and to yield to unforeseen Temptations, by the strength of that Grace, which is, and God will preserve in thee, thou art, on the other side, capable to lift thy self up again, to break out and *weep bitterly*, so as if God looks upon the sins as commited, which thou might'st have commited if thou had'st bin tempted to commit them, he considers them also as effaced by Repentance, which he would thou had'st, if thou had'st commited them: though this does not hinder thee from working out thy Salvation with Fear and Trembling. Fear that piercing and severe Eye, which sees and punishes thy sins to come, as well as the present; which knows and abominates those evil dispositions of thy heart thou art not accquainted withal, as well as the sins thou wotteſt of. Choak the buds of thy Vices, lest they come to bring forth bitter branches, and be imputed to thee, though they should bring forth nothing. Endeavour in thy self to have Dispositions to all good works, and habits of all the Vertues.

And

And in doing this, although God Almighty's Providence does not preſent thee with means to exert and exerciſe thoſe Vertues, yet his goodneſs will judge thee according as thou would'ſt have done had'ſt thou had the means. If thou art poor, and out of a condition to give Alms, the Judge will not fail to ſay; *I was an hungry, and thou gaveſt me meat, thirſty and thou gaveſt me drink, naked and thou cloathedſt me:* yes, ſays he, thou haſt done it, becauſe thou would'ſt have done it, if it had been in thy power.

Prayer.

THE more I think of thee, O my God, the more I find thy Judgments incomprehenſible and thy Ways paſt finding out. I ſtand in infinite arrears to thy goodneſs, but I owe thee infinitely more than I ſee: and the benefits, that are hid from me, ſurpaſs thoſe which are known to me; for thy mercy hath depths which it is impoſſible to ſound. I ought to look upon as ſo many goods, all the evils, I am ſaved by thee from: ſeeing I am but a weak Mortal, and a thouſand enemies that continually are juſtling me, would give me a thouſand aſſaults, and a thouſand times whol-

ly ſeize upon me, were it not for thy protecting me and preventing them. But above all, into the number of Obligations I ought to put that which I have to thy Sovereign goodneſs, the infinite number of ſins, which I might have, but have not committed. For I may thank the World for the ſeeds of all thoſe crimes, and thoſe ſeeds had ſprouted firſt and grown up to the height of the Cedars of Libanus, *if thy good Grace had not choak'd them. I am environed with Temptations, and there is not one of them but is allyed to ſome motion of my concupiſcence: inſomuch that if thy Grace were not a Bridle to my heart, that tames and breaks it, it would fling out every moment, and take its full ſwing in diſſoluteneſs. So I acknowledge,* St. Auguſtin. *O my God, that to thee I owe all the good I have, and all the evil I have not; I owe to thee the Remiſſion of all the ſins I have commited, becauſe thou haſt pardoned them; and I look upon as pardoned all thoſe I have not commited, becauſe thy Grace hath prevented my committing them. This teaches me in what manner I ought to underſtand that which thou haſt told me, O my Saviour, To whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little. This was to diſcover the proud Phariſee, to whom thou ſpakeſt, the ſource of his Indevotion and his*

his little love. He believ'd he had leſs obligation to thy Mercy, becauſe having committed fewer ſins, as he thought, he believ'd he owed thee much leſs. As for me, I ſay, to whom leſſer is forgiven, the ſame loveth more. Yes, O my God, I have more obligation for the ſins which thou haſt prevented my committing, than for thoſe, thou haſt remitted me: It is a much greater good to render a man invulnerable, than to cure him of the Wounds he has received; it is better never to fall into the Fire and Water, than to be drawn out thence with the peril of continuing there: And it is more happy alwayes to be well, than to recover of a ſickneſs. But above all, ſince it is a great unhappineſs to have offended thee, O God, 'tis a much greater bleſſing to have bin preſerved from ſin by thy Grace, than to re-enter into favour after having violated thy moſt ſacred Majeſty. O my Redeemer, deliver me then from all iniquity to come, prevent me in all my miſdoings, dry up the ſource of my crimes, root every ill diſpoſition out of my heart, diſpoſe me to all the Vertues; that I may be judg'd in thy ſight to have fulfill'd all Righteouſneſs, that I may be rewarded even for the good works I had not done, becauſe I had an intention to do them.

CHAP. III.

Other Conſiderations upon this Truth: That the pleaſures of ſenſe, nor in their Uſe, nor in their Abuſe, agree with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity and Devotion.

THE Pleaſures of the World are for the ſenſes, or for the imaginations. Now theſe faculties are corporeal, and conſequently all their pleaſures are corporeal too: this is enough to teach thoſe that would follow *the mind of the Goſpel* that they cannot lawfully ſeek them. For the Goſpel, of our Lord Chriſt leads Men to neglect and contemn that Body: And therefore it ſpeaks of it with ſo much Slight. According to the ſtyle of the Holy Ghoſt, *The Body is but Duſt and Aſhes, an earthly Tabernacle, an Houſe of Clay deſtroyed by Worms, a Flower that cometh forth and is cut down, a River that runneth apace, a Shadow which diſappears, a Dream which vaniſheth away, a Smoke which is conſumed in its lifting up.* And as it ſpeaks of it with contempt, ſo it would alſo that we have little care of it. *Take no care of the Body* ſaith St. *Paul, to obey the luſts thereof. Take no thought for the morrow; the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of its ſelf:* be in little pain *for what ye ſhall eat, or wherewithal ye ſhall be clothed.*

As for the Soul, the holy Spirit would have us turn all our cares on that ſide. He would have us vigilant and ſober, becauſe the Devil watches about it as a roaring Lyon, ſeeking to devour it. He commands us to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, and that we be in a perpetual ſolicitude about it. He Or-

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ders us to nouriſh it with the milk of the Word, ſincere and without deceit, and that we furniſh it with ſtrong meats. He wiſhes us to entertain it continually in an holy joy. He would have us ſearch after thoſe ſovereign pleaſures that are to be found in the poſſeſſion of God, which are only for the Soul. The Goſpel requires of us to imbelliſh it, and that we labour to adorn it, that it may be found a glorious *Spouſe* not having ſpot or wrinkle, worthy to be preſented to its head, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Examine the conduct of Voluptuous men; it is quite contrary to this: they act as if they were all Fleſh, and as if their Soul were only Salt to keep the Body from corrupting. All the *Ideas* they have of Pleaſure, derive from the Senſes and the Imagination, and without a metaphor, they are (as they call themſelves) Men of Senſe, and they conceive no more what we call ſpiritual pleaſures, than blind men do colours. As therefore, they never taſted other delights than bodily ones, they believe themſelves oblig'd to the Body for all their Happineſs. And in effect ſo it is: For at the time when they taſte carnal Pleaſures, we cannot ſay they are unhappy, ſince happineſs conſiſts in Pleaſure and Joy, and they have them at that moment: So that becauſe we intirely love what we conſider as the ſource of our felicity, we cannot think it ſtrange that theſe worldly People love their body perfectly, which they look upon as the only Source of their Pleaſures. We ſee alſo, that theſe men have the ſame Sentiments for their Body as holy men have for God, who is their ſovereign good, and in whom they find their ſovereign pleaſure. They adore this Body of theirs, they cheriſh, they perfume it, they offer Incenſe and Sacrifice to it: If one ſhould give a blow or a gird to this ſame Body, Oh! how jealous they are on't as of a Divinity. More Indignation they have againſt him that ſhould hurt this Fleſh, than againſt a Blaſphemer or a Sa-

crilegious Perſon. In a word, their Body holds ſo much of a Divinity, that they Sacrifice unto it, even their very Conſcience, nay and God himſelf. But nothing is more oppoſite to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity and Devotion than this Sentiment. For the truly faithful ones are oblig'd to ſlight the Body, to ſacrifice it to God, to ſee it torn in pieces for his name, and to renounce all the pleaſures of ſenſe for his Glory.

The Spirit of the Goſpel and of Devotion abſolutely tends to the contempt of the World; but the ſpirit of Voluptuouſneſs and ſenſuality to the love of the World. How muſt we love the World, when it careſſes us, and is mighty kind and pleaſurable to us, if we love it when it perſecutes us and ſteeps us in Gall? The World is a mere Cheat and Gull, and an undeniable Source of Deluſions: it maſques it ſelf, and would be ſeen by us under the image of fleſhly pleaſure: It imbraces us under the habit of Flowers, but under theſe Flowers are a thouſand Thorns. We do not ſee theſe thorns, we only ſmell the Flowers; we are ſenſible of ſuch pleaſures and love that cauſes them: But all the World knows, nought is more contrary to Devotion than the love of the World, and we have made it appear elſewhere: ſo as by conſequence nothing is more oppoſite to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity and Devotion than ſenſual Pleaſure.

The Spirit of Chriſtian Religion would inſpire a contempt of the preſent, and a deſire after the other Life. Now certain it is, that nothing tyes men ſo much to Life, as the pleaſures of Senſe: the Saints ſay, and ought to ſay, *I deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt which is far better. I know, when this earthly houſe ſhall be diſſolved, we have an Houſe eternal in the Heavens; and therefore we deſire to be clothed upon with our Houſe which is from Heaven. None of theſe things moving, neither count I my Life dear unto my ſelf. As the hart panteth after the wa-*

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ter-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God. When ſhall I come, and appear before God? It's impoſſible that men, who live in a perpetual uſe of Voluptuouſneſs, ſhould have theſe thoughts. Every one wiſhes to be happy, and when once he is, or at leaſt believes he is ſo, he cannot renounce what he fancies the cauſe of his felicity: theſe carnal-minded men think themſelves happy at ſuch time as they injoy their Pleaſures; they have no *Idea* of any other Beatitude but of that they injoy in this preſent life. They can every day ſpeak both about another life, and another happineſs: But they have got an habit not to let themſelves be touch'd but by ſenſe and Imagination: and ſo becauſe this life and this happineſs do not fall under their Senſes; nor can be imagined by them, they cannot conſider them but as imaginary Beings, which have no relation to them; becauſe they have not any *Idea* of them in their minds. Moreover their hearts meeting in this life with a *fat Land*, that is, much proſperity, do take very deep rooting there. Their affections being thoroughly ingaged in carnal pleaſures, bound themſelves in the poſſeſſion of Senſible Objects: they wiſh for nothing more beſides, for that no body wiſhes for things which he does not know, and whereof he has no clear and certain *Ideas*: The Earth becomes their Country, they naturalize themſelves here; every thing elſe is a ſtrange and unknown Land.

Let people ſay what they pleaſe: but queſtionleſs we have an ill preparation for Death in the continual uſe of thoſe pleaſures, whoſe Innocence the World maintains. *O Death*, ſaid a Wiſe Man, *how cruel is the remembrance of thee to him that lives quietly among his Poſſeſſions.* One lives indeed more commodiouſly in a Palace than in a Priſon; but one finds it more trouble to dye in that than in this. How inſupportable is the thought of Death, his preſence how affrightful to him

him, who lives in the midſt of Pleaſures! he looks upon Death as a Judge that comes to pronounce on him a diſmal Sentence; or an Executioner, that ſeizes him to be lead to puniſhment. But the faithful one, who has ever held his *Fleſh* in an intire Privation of Carnal Pleaſures, fancies Death as a Meſſenger that brings him good news, as a deliverer that is come to throw down the four Walls of his Priſon down to the Ground, and will leave a paſſage free on all ſides to flye away to Heaven. The Voluptuous they muſt be dragg'd to death; they lay hold on every thing in the way to ſtop themſelves: they give place to neceſſity, but they do it with an aukward and ill grace. Theſe therefore, who multiply the pleaſures of their Senſes, make themſelves Chains, the breaking whereof will coſt them many a groan and many a tear. But pious people who have renounc'd the pleaſures of life, cannot be in pain to forſake the preſent life, ſince they have quitted that which life has moſt agreeable.

I ſhould ſay here, that the Pleaſures of Senſe are enemies to Devotion, becauſe they abſolutely take away the taſte of the Spiritual Pleaſures which the faithful find in the commerce they have with God; but that I have ſaid it already, and it is ſo evident both in Reaſon and Experience. We know, that thoſe Slaves of ſenſual Pleaſures look upon all that is ſaid of the pleaſures of Devotion as mere idle Stories. Speak to them of the delights which the faithful Soul taſts when God ſpeaks to it within its heart, and during, the ſilence of its paſſions, of the ſweetneſs it finds in meditating on the Love he hath for us, and in contemplating on its Myſteries; All this will appear to them as Dream and Viſion.

Undoubtedly, one is not ſenſible of the pleaſures of the Mind, but in proportion, as he hath renounc'd thoſe of the Body. And therefore we *Chriſtians* are all ſo little

little touch'd with Spiritual pleaſures, with Prayer, Meditation, Contemplation; becauſe we are not of thoſe who have perfectly renounced Senſual pleaſures. In this reſpect, we muſt confeſs Rich and Great men are expoſed to great Temptations: their condition, *ſay they*, obliges them to draw after them a great equipage of Pleaſures; if it be ſo, they are very unhappy: And in proſpect to this, it may be, our Saviour ſaid; *How hard a thing is it for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?* Riches and Grandeur are continual Temptations to Voluptuouſneſs, and it's very difficult for him that is always tempted, not to yield ſometimes. But although Moderation and Temperance are praiſe-worthy, when they are kept amid ſo many Enemies that conſpire their ruin, it is very rarely ſo; and therefore Devotion is not ſo common among them, who, by their Rank, fancy themſelves obliged to live evermore in Pleaſures.

In ſhort, if it be permitted us to draw proofs from Examples, as without doubt it ought to be, we may eaſily prove, that the Spirit of Devotion and Chriſtianity are enemies to Senſual Pleaſures. Whether are the *Chriſtians* of our age, that live with a freedom, which auſtere morality calls *Libertinage*, better entred in the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, than the *Chriſtians* of former ages, who led a moſt ſevere and rigorous life? Many there have been, who not finding a retreat ſecure enough, in the World, againſt the temptations of Voluptuouſneſs, have gone to ſeek it in Deſarts, where they found none but pure and innocent Objects: ſome have worn Sack-cloth as *John* the *Baptiſt*: and others reſiding in humane Society have prefer'd Faſtings and mortification of the Body before Pleaſures of the Senſe. Do ye believe, that theſe people were wiſer than us, or are we wiſer than them? I know ſome will not heſitate on the matter, but file theſe Auſterities to the account

account of Fanaticiſm and Deluſion of the Spirit of Errour. But certainly, this is a raſh Judgment, for which we appeal to the Tribunal of God, to whom alone appertains the right of diſtinguiſhing Sincerity from Hypocriſie in ſuch auſtere lives.

But would we have an example that is not ſubject to errour, let us look up to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: had his life any thing common with ſenſual pleaſures? You ſee him born in a Stable, brought up in the houſe of a Carpenter: you ſee him faſt forty days in the Wilderneſs; you ſee him live on the Alms of Women that followed him. We hear him declaring, that he had not whereon to lay his head: We ſee him go on foot and without equipage, from City to City. And does this now reliſh of the Spirit of the World, and a delicious Life? Who can know better what is the ſpirit of Chriſtianity than our Saviour himſelf, and what are the effects of Devotion, but he who was perfectly devoted to his Father? after this, let none tell me, that our Lord was no enemy to Pleaſures, becauſe he was preſent at Feaſts and Nuptials. It were to be wiſh'd that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt were at all our Feaſts; We ſhould not ſee Inſolence and Debauchery to reign there, Wiſdom, Temperance, Sobriety, and the higheſt moderation would march in his Train.

Meditation.

SEeing *thou art compaſs'd about*, O my Soul, *with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, run with patience the Race that is ſet before thee?* ſeeing ſo many, ſo holy, ſo excellent examples have gone before thee, thou muſt follow and

and imitate them. Wouldſt thou follow an *Elias* in the Deſart, a *Moſes* on the Mountain, faſting forty days, and not feed but on the bread of Ravens, nor drink but of the water of a Torrent? But theſe are particular Vocations, that do not refer to thee. Nevertheleſs, if any one would imitate *John Baptiſt*, wear Sack-cloth with him, be clothed with Camels hair, and eat locuſts and wild-honey: let's not ſay, *becauſe he is not come eating nor drinking he hath a Devil.* Have a care of making ſuch raſh judgments. Thoſe that come to exhort men to repentance, muſt preach up mortification, both in their actions and words, and habit and food. Thou haſt great need, O my heart, both to mortifie thy ſelf and to repent: ſo as it would be very neceſſary that thy Body ſhould carry Sack-cloath and Aſhes. But this example of *John Baptiſt* does not become a Law; and if thy God hath not commanded it thee, thou canſt not be obliged thereby. Behold then another example, another model much more perfect which thou oughteſt to follow; and that is of thy Saviour, the pattern by whoſe traces thou oughteſt to guide thy ſteps. Live as he did, and thou wilt live well enough.

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The Diſciple ſhould not hope to be greater than his Maſter. He liv'd in the World but he was not of the World; He eat and drank to give examples of Sobriety. He convers'd with men, to teach them to ſpeak wiſely and piouſly; for he never open'd his mouth but for edification. He is the model of all, which thou oughteſt to ſuffer, to do, to abſtain from. Suffer patiently with him the rebukes, and the outrages of the World: drink as he did, with a ſpirit of Submiſſion, the cup of God's wrath when he ſhall preſent it thee: do good works with him: ſpend the day in doing good to the afflicted, and the night in Prayers: let thy meat be to do, both night and day, the will of thy Father which is in Heaven: Abſtain, as he did, from all the pleaſures of the World: take his Croſs upon thee, and mortifie thy Sin in thy fleſh, ſince thy Saviour has mortified it in his. *If any one loves me*, ſays he, *let him come after me and follow me.* Alas my Soul! how far off art thou from him, how imperfect thy imitation, and how much doſt thou ſink below thy example? But loſe no courage, labour, walk on, let the things alone that are behind, and tend to thoſe which are before

ſore. The holy Ghoſt, that was ſent by thy Saviour, will conduct thee in the moſt difficult path, as in a ſmooth and even Country: If thou can'ſt not attain the perfection of that great Example God has ſet before thine eyes, at leaſt approach as near to it, as thou art able. For, in ſhort, if thou wouldſt be happy with him, thou muſt with him be righteous and holy: Thou muſt enter in at the ſtrait Gate, and walk in the way of Mortification to arrive at that life, whereof he is both the Author and the Source. The Soul of thy Saviour did not only continue void of all ſenſual Pleaſures, but it was penetrated by the moſt piercing Dolours. To imitate him, renounce fleſhly pleaſures, and ſubmit thy ſelf to the Anguiſhes of Repentance.

Prayer.

O *My divine Redeemer, my Jeſus, my Saviour, and my God, thou wouldſt I ſhould imitate thee*: *Thou haſt ſaid unto me*, Learn of me: *and thy Apoſtles ſay*, Look up to Jeſus the Author and finiſher of your Faith; be ye Imitators of us, as we are of Chriſt. *It is fit, O my Saviour I ſhould imitate thee*:

thee: Thou hast taken mine infirmities that I might glory in possessing thy Vertues. But if this be glorious, how difficult is that? I can do all by thee, who strengthenest me and I can do nothing by my self. Give me therefore grace necessary to fulfil that which thou commandest me; and after this command whatever thou wilt. Thou hast made thy self like unto me in taking upon thee my flesh, make me like unto thee by giving me thy Spirit. I am thy Image, O my God, but a defac'd, corrupted one, over which the Devil has display'd his infamous Characters. Cleanse me again and repass the Pencil of thy Grace over those effaced Lines of this Image; and wash away all the impurities which the World has poured upon it. If I cannot follow thee, draw me that I may run after thee. Give me the wings of thy love, that I may flye to thee: give me, O my Saviour, the desire of imitating thee; for I would imitate thee; I will it, O my God, but it does not come from a victorious but a slavish will. I will it, but I do it not, and I see by this that I will it not. Lord, give me both to will and to do. My flesh thinks the way thou hast walk'd in rough and uneasie: it recoils and starts back at the sight of those Difficulties: how wanton, loose and wicked is this un-

unhappy Fleſh! How would it have done, hadſt thou indiſpenſibly commanded it to walk in the way of thy fore-runner John Baptiſt, *to dwell in the Wilderneſs; to have for ones habitation a Grott at the foot of a Mountain or the Trunk or ſhadow of an old Oak, to have a Rayment of hair; to dine on Locuſts and a little wild Honey for a great meal?* If *thou didſt not lead this ſort of life thy ſelf, 'twas to ſpare us, and not make us imitate a life almoſt inimitable. Theſe are only the outſides of Piety, which may ſometimes be the mantle of Hypocriſie, but thou haſt given me to imitate the greateſt Examples of real, ſolid, and internal Vertues.* If *thou command'ſt me not to wear an hair Garment, thou wilt that* I *ſhould put on holineſs and righteouſneſs; bowels of mercy, and a patient mind.* If *thou doſt not ſend me into the Deſart, thou would'ſt have me retire into the ſecret of the heart for to converſe with thee, and comprehend the Truth which thou would'ſt reveal unto me. If thou oblige me not to eat only Locuſts; at leaſt 'tis thy good Pleaſure I ſhould oftentimes eat the Bread of Tears, and mingle my Drink with weeping. Thou would'ſt that* I *make my repaſts near the fountain of* Haran, *upon* Jacobs *Well, profound in myſteries, full of living Water, Conſolation and Joy;*

that

that I *ſeek my delights in thee, O my Saviour who art the fountain of Water bubling up to eternal life; Thou wouldeſt that* I *feaſt my ſelf with thy Love, and that* I *find no Pleaſure but in thee. Do this therefore, O bleſſed Jeſus Take the taſte away from me of all the Worldly pleaſures, make mine heart to be intirely employed about theſe, that in imbracing thee I may taſte a Pleaſure that may ſo fill the capacity of my Soul, as it may cry out in the ſenſe of that ſweetneſs;* I *am filled, as it were with marrow and fatneſs.*

CHAP. IV.

What may be accounted innocent Pleaſure That Devotion is no diſquieting and uneaſie thing, nor an Enemy to Pleaſure.

IN the foregoing *Chapters* I have proved, that the Spirit of Devotion is an Enemy to ſenſual Pleaſures, and not only to thoſe Pleaſures, which, confeſt on all hands, are criminal, but to thoſe too that we call innocent ones. In this rank I have placed the continual Divertiſements, whereunto the higher part of mankind give 'emſelves up. It is time now to explain and unfold a queſtion, which may be ſtarted here, To know, whether it be neceſſary to renounce all ſort of Pleaſure to be *Chriſtianly* and truly pious? Now in one word the anſwer cannot be return'd, it being

ing one of the moſt nice and delicate matters in *Chriſtian Morality.*

I ſay therefore, firſt of all, That Devotion is no Enemy to Joy, it ſuffers us to diſtinguiſh betwixt innocent and ful Pleaſures; it is neither fierce nor brutiſh: It ought be courteous, civil, ſweet, and modeſt: It flies ſoft-, nor does it inveſt it ſelf with flowers, yet it affects o appear beſet with Thorns nor habilimented with ckles. In ſhort, 'tis not neceſſary, That a faithful on, to be ſincerely devout, ſhould nouriſh, in himſelf, enſive and lumpiſh melancholy: On the contrary, y is all gay and free: *The Heart of the righteous man continual Feaſt.* Our Lord *Jeſus* would not have us a gloomy Viſage, or an abaſed Air; he com-ds us even when we faſt and are mortifying our ſelves noint our Heads when we muſt be ſeen by men, we may avoid Oſtentation in our Piety.

To know what are innocent Pleaſures, we are to di-guiſh with exactneſs; and make a ſhort but general ew over all ſorts of Pleaſures.

Firſt, all the Pleaſures are either of the Mind, or of Senſes: Among the Senſes ſome are more viſible to matter, others are more diſengaged from them. the firſt order are the Taſte and Touch: Of the latter, Sight and Hearing. The more ſpiritual the Pleaſures the more eaſie it is to render them innocent: The re material they are, the more common they are to with Beaſts, and the more eaſie do they become iſh and ſinful. The Pleaſures of touching and ta-are ſuch: they are common to us with beaſts. If look upon them in themſelves, they are unworthy man; and if they be in the leaſt degree ex-re, we may ſay they become brutal. Neverthe-it's certain, that theſe Pleaſures, for that they are eſſary, are innocent in ſome degrees. There are in-rable Pleaſures, and actions neceſſary for the con-

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ſervation of Life; theſe Actions are eating, drinking and ſleeping. Theſe Pleaſures cannot be enemies to Piety, and Vertue. God is the Author of them; he has put certain Relations between us and their Objects he hath joyned Pleaſure to certain Actions, that we might love to do them, and, without perplexity, what is neceſſary to our Conſervation. We cannot but judge that Honey is ſweet and Gall bitter: we do not but find Pleaſure in the uſe of a good eatable, and feel a ſort of pain in eating any thing that is an Enemy to our Taſte. 'Tis impoſſible but we muſt have a pleaſure in drinking, after having ſuffered a long thirſt. This is not what I call the uſe of worldly Pleaſures: their uſe is voluntary, but it is not ſo here. Now the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation, as ſevere as it is, cannot exact of ſin unvoluntary Sentiments. We cannot ſeparate this Sentiment of Pleaſure from Actions that concern life; And if one could, we are not obliged to do it. *Jeſus Chriſt* does not command us to ſteep all our meats in Gall, and mingle our drink with Wormwood. Tho there be devout Perſons in the World that make their Vertue to conſiſt in a privation of thoſe neceſſary Pleaſures, and that ſay, *O God, grant me not to taſte any Pleaſure in the uſe of Worldly things*, they are hypocrites, have got the maggot of Superſtition in their heads. But let us take heed, this being a very ſlippery place. The bounds that ſeparate Innocence from Sin are ſo delicate as they are almoſt unperceivable: we paſs from one to the other without minding it. The point of ſeparation is that which diſtinguiſhes neceſſary from ſuperfluous. To find Pleaſure in eating, is innocent: To eat for the ſake of Pleaſure, is ſinful: we are to take nouriſhment as we do Remedies, for neceſſity only; and this, in the way of the World, cannot be ſubject to Sin altho Pleaſure caſts it's ſelf a croſs. But we cannot uſe herein without danger. There is nothing ſo well

what St. *Auſtin* ſays upon this occaſion. *When I paſs from the uneaſineſs and trouble of hunger to the comfort that eating affords me, this paſſage is ſtraightened with Ambushes by my concupiſcence. For it is accompanied with Pleaſure, and there is no other way whereby we can paſs to arrive at that comfort, which neceſſity obliges us to ſeek. And though the maintainance of life be the only thing that forces us to eat and drink; this dangerous Pleaſure comes athwart the way, and appears as a ſervant at the board. But frequently it indeavours to march before, with an intent to govern me to do for it, what I had deſign'd to do only for neceſſity. And that which ſerves to deceive us in this, is, that neceſſity has not the ſame extent as Pleaſure hath; there being oftentimes enough for neceſſity, when there is but a little for Pleaſure. We are alſo frequently uncertain, whether it be the need that we have to ſuſtain life that obliges us to eating, or whether it be the enchanting deceit of Pleaſure which hurries us away. Our unfortunate ſoul amuſes it ſelf with this uncertainty, and ſtrives to find out excuſes to defend it's ſelf.*

The ſight and hearing, do they furniſh us with pleaſures more pure and leſs carnal? Brutes are not acquainted with them: they are peculiar to men: If beaſts find pleaſure in the ſight of certain objects, it's always in relation to taſting and touching; whereof alone they are ſenſible. Nevertheleſs it is certain that among the Pleaſures of the Eye and Ear, there are many ſinful ones: and they are thoſe, which have a particular and near acquaintance with the corruption of our heart and mind, and are capable of awakening this Corruption. Of this kind are obſcene Pourtraits and Figures, laſcivious Diſcourſes, the ſights of Theatres, Beauties, loaden with borrowed Ornaments, accompanied with Geſtures, Actions and Speeches, proper to enflame luſt; when we uſe theſe pleaſures we always abuſe the Senſes; for this reaſon of them is unlawful. But among the Pleaſures of

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ſeeing and hearing we may find innocent ones, and theſe are almoſt thoſe only which come from the hand of God, without paſſing through the hands of Men; for man hath this unhappineſs, that he leaves the traces of his Corruption in what ever he handles. There can be no ſin in looking with Pleaſure and Admiration upon the Beauty of the Heavens, their Order, their Movement, their Light; upon pleaſant Landskips, green Meadows, the delightſom obſcurity of a Forreſt, or a River, that creeps between two Mountains. No fault is to be found with the Pleaſure of a murmuring Stream, nor in the innocent Muſick of a Multitude of Birds, that are rejoycing at the return of the Spring. None of theſe Pleaſures diſturb or diſquiet the Soul: ſweet, and not at all violent are their Impreſſions: They are not capable of carrying the Soul from without it's ſelf: and therefore they are well enough beloved by Piety. Their natural and pure *Ideas* may excite motions of Admiration for the great Creator, and Acknowledgement for their Authour, and conſequently they may inſpire Devotion for the Deity.

Other bodily Pleaſures there are, which I can't well refer to any of the Senſes: and therefore we'l call them *Pleaſures of Imagination.* Of this order is the Pleaſure of having fine Houſes, rich Furniture, magnificent Apparel, a great Train, and of having our eſtate preyd upon by a vaſt number of People: theſe Pleaſures are not without crime, ſeeing they are not without errour: theſe are pleaſures of Imagination, and therefore they have deluſion in them; and if deluſion, then Vanity; and if Vanity, then Sin. Wherefore the wiſe man cryes out upon all this, *Vanity of Vanities.* But there is more than Impoſture herein, we find Pride likewiſe. The pleaſure we take from this vain Pomp, Luxury, and Magnificence, proceeds from a deſire we have to be Great, and a pleaſure we take to appear ſo. We are very

very prone to deceive Men, and we try to deceive our ſelves. We are like thoſe Dwarfs, that affect to ſet themſelves on high places, that they may appear the taller. And therefore men who have leſs of merit and true greatneſs, are ordinarily the moſt enamour'd of theſe falſe Grandeurs. There are ſome Conditions indeed, from which Magnificence is almoſt inſeparable: God, who has inveſted Kings with their Authority, doth not think it ill, they ſhould be inveſted with Purple: and it is highly neceſſary that they ſhould be ſurrounded with a ſplendour to ſurpriſe the ſenſe, ſo as more eaſily to obtain that veneration from the heart which is due to them. This is an ordinary *Illuſion* of the Senſes, which makes us conſider how great that is which dazles them: but it is an Illuſion, which, in this caſe, is of ſome uſe. Where there is the true greatneſs of Quality, and Authority, an apparent grandeur may be indured; although by exceſs there may be Sin here as well as elſewhere. Great men reſemble thoſe Giants, who were not content with their natural greatneſs, but lifted their hands up towards Heaven to be ſeen afar off. Above all, this is a ſenſeleſs pleaſure, when one is little in all reſpects, to pleaſe himſelf with appearing Great, and debaſing the Purple to the Duſt, which ſhould not appear but upon or near the Throne. This is a vice of our Age, wherein I believe, we ſurpaſs all other Ages: and the corruption is gone ſo far, that it is made a duty to follow it. For ſome wiſe and pious Perſons there are, who propoſe this dangerous maxime with a great deal of Confidence: That there ought no difference to be made; that every one ſhould be apparell'd according to his condition; that we are not to affect Singularity. In a word, they boldly blame thoſe Women, who profeſſing a great Devotion wear no other than very mean cloaths, at a mighty

diſtance from the Luxury of Perſons of their Rank. A very ſtrange thing this, that we ſhould be ſo far removed from Piety, and have ſo much fear of approaching it, as to fly even the Appearances thereof? According to this Maxime 'tis held, that Chriſtian Women be cloathed with the moſt rich and magnificent Stuffs, that they be cover'd with Gold and precious Stones, ſince all Perſons of quality go ſo. If they retrench themſelves of theſe Vanities to do Alms, they are accus'd of being *Devoto's*. The miſchief, it ſeems, is without remedy, when't comes to this. The Church once believed, it did infinitely relax its ſelf, when it tolerated theſe Diſorders; but I am afraid it muſt ſhortly come to give them its Approbation. I would fain know of theſe People that maintain this Maxime, in what place they might find it? It is not in the *holy Scripture*; for St. *Paul* expreſly forbids Chriſtian Women the uſe of Gold and broidred hair. It is not in the Fathers; for they never ſpeak with more vigour than when they ſpeak againſt the luxury and pomp of Apparel: they call it *the Pomp of the Devil.* In all places they preach againſt this Vanity, and ſay that, by the Laws of Charity, we are obliged to renounce theſe ſuperfluities, to cloath the Poor, to comfort the Miſerable, to uphold the Church when it ſtaggers, or is in a low condition. They ſay that Simplicity and Plainneſs of Array is a ſign of Piety and renouncing the World.

But what is meant, when they ſay, *we muſt make no diſtinction?* muſt we be carried away by the ſtream becauſe it is a general and common evil? muſt not we labour to guard our ſelves from it? muſt no one dare to get out of the crowd of thoſe that deſtroy themſelves? for my part, I believe quite contrary, we ought to ſeparate our ſelves, if we have courage enough to do it. I would know, whether that ſovereign *Moderation* be not as good in Clothes as in other things: if it be good

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can it be evil to give examples of it? on the other ſide, is it not glorious to march the firſt in the way of Virtue? Apparel, I know, has been always different according to the diverſity of conditions. But firſt we are to obſerve, that in our age there are no People but carry a Magnificenee infinitely above their Condition. Now it hath always been accounted glorious to a man to do what he ought, according to the Eſtate wherein he is, when he his only to do his Duty. Moreover, Men did not heretofore diſtinguiſh their Condition ſo exactly as they do now adays: The difference of Conditions, muſt have been extreamly ſenſible and great, if it were permitted 'em to diſtinguiſh themſelves from others by Magnificence. It was not ſufficient to be rich only, or of a Birth a little elevated above the common people. And now if it be permitted to every one to be cloathed and have a Retinue according to his Condition, Pride and Vanity, that mark the bounds which diſtinguiſh conditions, will puſh men on to ſtrange exceſſes. 'Tis alſo good to conſider, that there's a great difference betwixt tolerating a thing as permitted, and authorizing it as neceſſary. Great Men may be ſuffer'd to diſtinguiſh themſelves from others by their Train, Equipage, and Habit, provided this does not go to the Exceſs that reigns in our Age: But never ought we to make this their Duty, nor to ſay to them, *be not particular from the reſt of your Rank.* On the contrary, we are to let them know, that it is glorious to them to renounce theſe unhappy Vanities, which are diſpleaſing to God. In ſhort, certain it is, that never was this Maxime more dangerous than in our Age, *the keeping up one's Quality*, in the *ſtyle* of the World: that is, to expend one's whole eſtate in Vanities, Habits, Ornaments, Equipages, and in things of that nature. When therefore any one ſays to a Gentleman, *be not ſingular, doe as other perſons of your*

Quality, he certainly authorizes this unhappy prodigality, which puts people out of a Condition to be liberal towards the maintenance of the Church. So that men may ſay what they will, but I will never believe that any one is endued with perfect Devotion, as long as I ſee him environed with the vain pomp of the World. One cannot have a true Devotion, unleſs he is truly humble. Now this reaſon why we ſhould make ſuch unprofitable Expences to maintain our quality in the World, draws its riſe from Pride. The true Chriſtian conſidering himſelf in himſelf and with regard had to God, knows he is nought but Duſt and Aſhes, and nothing before God: He is not ignorant that God hath no reſpect of Perſons, nor is acquainted with theſe differences of Conditions. Thus each truly devout Soul will, without doubt, renounce all thoſe exceſſive Ornaments, and ſpare all thoſe ſuperfluous expences to do good works withall.

In ſhort, we are not to perſuade our ſelves, that this *Inſtruction* which is really that of Chriſt himſelf, brings us into a Path, that leads us to *Superſtition*; and that pious Perſons are obliged to apparel themſelves after a baſe and extravagant manner. 'Tis in this reſpect, we may ſay, that we are to affect nothing. But there is a vaſt diſtance between the magnificence of this Age and thoſe cloaths that render men ridiculous. I could not refuſe this ſmall *Digreſſion* to combat the corruption of the age, in favour to many upright Souls, that deſire to do their Duty, but know not to what their Duty tyes them. And now I return to the Pleaſures of Imagination, wherof I began to ſpeak.

Among theſe pleaſures of the Imagination, ſome we find innocent. A man, for example, may, without ſin, take a great pleaſure in the cultivating a little land: His houſe is to him the moſt ſtately Palace, and Garden as good as the fineſt in the World. He will di-

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vert himſelf perfectly, in framing and ſetting right his little *Parterres*, his *Paliſado's*, his hedge-rows of Fruit and his dwarfiſh Trees. He will gather the fruit with more acknowledgment to God's goodneſs than Monarchs would have in taking Tributes, from all the Earth. A Father of a Family rejoyces at the good conduct of his Houſe; a Woman at her work; an Artificer at the ſucceſs of his labour. Is there not real happineſs in all this? Theſe are pleaſures of Imagination, but not of a fooliſh one, which feeds its ſelf with Impoſtures; but, one that is conducted by reaſon, clarified by Grace; and judges that we ought to eſteem more what we have, than all which we have not. Theſe pleaſures, and theſe innocent errours, if I may call them ſo, are not altogether enemies to the Spirit of Devotion.

Laſtly, there are pleaſures of the mind, amongſt which it is eaſier to find Innocence: honeſt and civil Converſations, reading of good Books, eloquent Diſcourſes, the ſtudy of good Sciences and works of Wit may afford theſe Pleaſures. But many cautions are to be us'd herein. Firſt, we muſt take care leſt we confound the Wit with its impurity. Oftentimes we think we find Pleaſure in a *Piece*, becauſe it has Wit, and this is only, becauſe it has Impurity There are certain Poductions of Wit, that flatter our Paſſions: Of this nature are the Compoſures of the *Theatre*, the fables of *Romances*, and that which they call gallant Proſe and Verſe. We admire there the delicacy of Expreſſion, the Beauty of Thought, and the Strength of Imagination. Look a little nearer, and you will ſee, that the heart is incomparably more touch'd than the Mind. Theſe Productions we love, becauſe they have a ſecret Alliance with the Corruption of our Hearts, and a conformity to the Impreſſions of our vitiated Imagination. The Pleaſure that we find

therein, comes chiefly from the impurity, which is so nicely and delicately displayed. There are some objects, whose *Turpitude* is so great, as at the first blush we dread them: When they are shewn us all naked, we cannot endure the sight; nevertheless we are willing enough to take a view of them, if they be cover'd with a thin Veil which hides their Uncleanness from the Senses, and yet lets it be wholly seen by the Imagination, which applies it's self to these Objects with an extream Delight: This is the Character of those Works, whereof we speak. We are to take care also, that among the innocent Pleasures, we do not taste that which Springs from sinful, curious, and visibly vain *Sciences*, of no more manner of use, and that only serve to fill up the Mind's Capacity and an Emptiness of all good things. In a word, if it be permitted to taste Pleasure in the study of good Sciences, and useful and innocent Knowledges, at least we ought to have a care we be not wholly taken up by them. Nothing can be innocent that becomes to us an obstacle of Piety.

This is sufficient me thinks, to shew, that Devotion has not declared War to Pleasure and Joy: In making a wise and prudent choice of such Pleasures, we may find them sufficient to sweeten the bitterness of Life; so as there will be no need of burying our selves alive; and keeping the Soul constantly mourning and wailing, and cloathing it in a black and dismal melancholy.

Meditation.

HOw much indebted am I to my God! What shall I render unto him for his loving kindness, who hath made me to be placed in the midst of so many good things, and

and left me the Enjoyment of them? I ſhould have had no cauſe to complain if he had torn me out of this World to throw me into Hell. Was it not in his free-will alſo, to make even this World here to become an Hell to me, that I might be ſaved in the other World? I could not blame his Wiſdom nor his Juſtice, though he had put me here to continual torments; Tho he had lockt up from me all the ſources of theſe Pleaſures; though he made all my good Days ſo many darkſome Nights. He might have left me Eyes only to pour forth Tears; Ears to hear only the ſound of Thunder and the Voice of his Judgment; Taſte, only for the bitterneſs of Gall and Worm-wood; Touching, only to feel the weight of his Blows. He might have mingled Gall in all my repaſts, empoiſoned all objects, and (that I may ſo ſpeak) inveſted them with Thorns, to pierce me as they came near me. If he had done this, I muſt have ſaid, *He is Juſt, and I am a Sinner*: it is reaſonable, that this World being ſullied by my Sins ſhould be the Theatre of my Puniſhments; and that the Object of my Senſes, upon which my Corruption hath diſplay'd it's ſelf, become the Avengers of my Crimes. But all on the

other ſide, God, who commands me to be ſober, wiſe, temperate, moderate, to renounce the vain Pleaſures of the Fleſh and World, leaves me ſtill, for all this, more Pleaſures than I deſerve: He leaves me enough to temper, and to render the ſad conſequences of ſin ſupportable. True it is, he ſmites me ſometimes; and makes me to ſee his angry Countenance. I am ſubject to maladies: I may become weak and feeble; I may loſe what he has given me of good things; my honours may be taken away from me; I may be perſecuted. But when I reckon my ill and compare them with my good dayes, I find, that theſe are in a greater number than them. My Pleaſures do infinitely ſurmount my Pains: If I recollect my ſickneſſes and my hours of trouble, perhaps they may ariſe to ſome Months, or almoſt to ſome years: But how many years of Proſperity hath my God granted me? Wretched and ungrateful, as I am, A little pain in my Finger hinders me from being ſenſible of the whole body's health: one hour of perplexity envenoms my whole life, and makes me forget all my Proſperities and all the Obligations I have to my God. But though my misfortunes were very long and

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purſuing, they would not be ſtill ſo long as my life, and by conſequence, not have ſo long duration as my ſins: and therefore I ſhould have no reaſon to complain to, but rather to bleſs and praiſe my God. For if I am unhappy a few years, I am a ſinner from the very firſt moment of my Life. So that if the moments of my Afflictions were to paſs in account before God, and to ſatiſfie his Juſtice for ſo many moments mark't by my ſins; Alas, my Soul! how much would'ſt thou ſtill owe to the Divine Juſtice, ſince the number of thy Calamities does not come near the number of thy Offences. The moments, wherein God hath made me to enjoy moſt of his Bleſſings, have been thoſe, wherein I have render'd my ſelf the moſt ſinful by the abuſe of my Proſperity: And the leaſt ſin I commited in one of thoſe moments, deſerves pains of an infinite duration.

Prayer.

ALmighty God, who makeſt all things with a profound Wiſdom, I find nothing to ſay againſt thy Works. All that thou haſt made is good: But I mourn for my Iniquity, and bewail my Corruption. Good is in the neighbourhood of Evil; and the things which are permitted me are ſo near to thoſe that are forbidden me, that if I forget innocent Pleaſures but a little, I ſtraight paſs into ſinful

ones. At all paſſages the Devil lies in Ambuſh, and my Concupiſcence lays ſnares for me every where; Narrow is the way, and borders on precipices. I know, Lord, that thy goodneſs is infinite, and thou doſt not exact from me that I ſhould be evermore in Grief; thou alloweſt ſome grains to the Feſh, as rebellious as 'tis againſt thee. But how difficult and dangerous is it to mark out preciſely the Bounds that diſtinguiſh permitted from forbidden Pleaſures. If I give ear to my Concupiſcence, it will ſtretch the limits far beyond all Reaſon: it will endeavour to perſuade me, that whatſoever is agreeable cannot be bad; whether I eat or drink, am aſleep or awake, am idle or at work, I am always in the Temptation and Danger of falling into Exceſs. Thy Providence willeth that I paſs through all theſe Dangers: Thou alone art able to conduct me ſafely through this difficult Path: Let thy Spirit lead me as in an even Plain; Let me turn neither to the right nor to the left. Here are two Extremities to fly; thou hateſt carnal Pleaſures, but it may be thou doſt not love exceſſive Auſterities. Bodily Exerciſe profiteth little, but Godlineſs has the promiſes of this Life and of that which is to come. I know, O my God, that 'tis much more dangerous to fall into one Exceſs than into the other. All thou ſay'ſt of bodily Exerciſe is, That it is profitable but to a few things: but as to the other exceſs, to wit, of Pleaſures, it hurts and incommodes all things; it makes havock of the Conſcience, it corrupts the Heart, ruines the Body, grieves the Holy Spirit, and it ſeparates the Soul from thee, O Lord. 'Tis incomparably more ſafe to renounce all Pleaſures in general than to chooſe ſome, and expoſe ones ſelf to the danger of taking thoſe that are unlawful. O thou, who holdeſt in thine hands the Heart of Men as the Rivers of Water, turn mine into the ſafeſt way, wherein I am certain not to offend thee; and that is the privation of all ſenſual Pleaſures. Take from me that taſte of all Voluptuouſneſs, wherewith I am inchanted. Caſt off from the

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Demon of Pleaſure, that Maſk which covers him, and that fading Beauty which charms me; that I may ſee all his Vgline ſs and Deformity, and deteſt and fly it. Since the Body, which thou obligeſt me to hale after me, to nouriſh and conſerve, binds me to do Actions conjoyn'd with Pleaſure, give me the Grace to do thoſe Actions to ſatisfie Neceſſity, and not to ſerve Senſuality. Diſcover to me the Snares that Luſt lays for me under the Cloak of Neceſſity. Let me not by an ill habit, make that neceſſary which is ſuperfluous according to the Laws of Nature and Reaſon; that my Soul under thy guidance may keep its Body under as a Slave, and not ſerve it as its Maſter.

CHAP. V.

That we are not to conſult our Heart and Senſes in the choice of Pleaſures: That Devotion *leads us to true Pleaſure.*

THIS obſerv'd, that for the obtaining any thing we muſt ask much more than we have a mind to get; and that to bring men to juſt Sentiments in withdrawing them from their Errours, it is good to carry them a little into the other *Extremity*, that in their return they may abide at leaſt in a reaſonable middle. This perhaps has made ſo many *Chriſtian* Authors and Preachers to imitate the ſtyle of the *Stoicks* upon the Nature of *Pleaſure* and *Pain*. Theſe People ſay, that Pain is no evil; and Pleaſure is not a Good: We can ſay, they be perfectly happy in the burning Bull of *Phalaris*, and perfectly unhappy in taſting the greateſt Pleaſures. This method is not, it may be, ſo good, as we imagine: We foyle and diſhearten mens Minds by requiring too much of them; and nothing is perſuaſive, when Truth is inveſted with *Paradoxes*, which awaketh curioſity, but diſtemper the Mind. After all, we can never perſuade men to the con-

contrary to what they feel. *Cicero* tells us of one of these Philoſophers, who had bin blinded by the pompous reaſonings of his *Sect*; But a great Rheum falling upon his Eyes, which put him to horrible Tortures, prevailed over the Illuſions of his Philoſophy, and made him abandon it. When we ſee one of theſe *Sages* cruelly tormented upon his Bed with the Gout or Stone; and hear him ſay, *Thou mayſt do as thou wilt, O Pain, but thou ſhalt never make me confeſs, thou art an evil*, we cannot keep our ſelves from looking upon this as a Comedy and profound Hypocriſie: Reaſon can do nought againſt Experience, nor againſt a Senſe ſo lively as that of pain. The *Martyrs*, I conceive might be happy amidſt their puniſhments, becauſe they did not feel all their Pains. For I hold that their Soul by the help of Grace was ſo ſtrongly taken up with the Glory and Crown they were about to receive, that hardly any Room remain'd to them for other Sentiments. The Patience of the Faithful in their Calamities ariſes, in my Opinion, from no other cauſe, than that their Souls being fixt wholly upon God, and his Heaven the Object of their Hope, do partly unite 'emſelves from the Body, and give leſs Heed or Attention to it's Annoyances: Impatience, on the other ſide, is a motion of the Soul, which turns it ſelf wholly to the Body, to be abandon'd to pain, and to feel all its racks. So that I conclude, Pain is an Evil: Which is to confeſs bodily Pleaſure is a good. 'Twas my belief, I owed this Confeſſion to them, whom we would prevail withall to renounce ſenſual and fleſhly Pleaſures, that by this ſincerity and plain dealing, we may render them more attentive to our Reaſons.

We do not entreat them to renounce bodily Pleaſure as an evil in its ſelf, but as a petty and ſmall good, that brings along after it, in its train, an incredible Multitude of miſchiefs; and as a good, which is unworthy of Man born for the moſt noble Pleaſures, and deſtin'd to the poſ-

poſſeſſion of the greateſt Goods. What ever we do we can never rivit out of the Mind of man this Opinion; that Happineſs conſiſts in Pleaſure. I will not oppoſe this Maxime: The chiefeſt beatitude conſiſts, without doubt, in the Poſſeſſion of the chiefeſt Good, and in this Poſſeſſion the Soul taſts it's chief Pleaſure. And if we pleaſe, we may call this chief Pleaſure the chief Happineſs of man. But men are terribly chows'd herein: They are perſuaded, that the Soul is not capable of any true Pleaſure, without it be what comes from the Body. Among men generally, a ſpiritual pleaſure and a chimerical pleaſure are all one. All thoſe who make their felicity to conſiſt in Contemplation and in Actions intirely removed from thoſe, which make up carnal pleaſure, paſs in the World for *viſionary wights*; this Errour ſprings from the Heart and Senſes: And therefore I ſay, that in the Judgment we ought ro have of pleaſures, and in the choice we ought to make thereof, we are not to conſult either our Senſes or our Heart. This miſtake, I ſay, is cauſed by the Heart and Senſes; becauſe they believe nothing agreeable, but what is agreeable to them. We judge things good or evil only according to the relation they have to the Faculties, whereunto they raiſe either Pleaſure or Pain: And therefore the Heart and Senſes which are corporeal cannot be touch'd by ſpiritual things: They judge theſe cannot be agreeable, becauſe they are ſenſible of no Pleaſure in them: Juſt as a blind man, if he would judge according to the report of his Senſes, undoubtedly he would judge, that there are no colours; or if there were, they could not make any Impreſſion upon his Senſes. This is then an *Impoſture* which we muſt lay open and diſperſe.

Firſt of all, we ought to remember, that Man is made up of two parts, the Soul and Body: Each of theſe parts hath it's ſeparate and diſtinct *Goods*. The Goods of the Mind are ſpiritual, and thoſe of the Body ne-

neceſſarily corporeal. Of theſe two parts the Soul is infinitely the more excellent. From this, Man is properly denominated, and the Body is but a Retainer to him; ſo that conſequently, the Goods and Pleaſures which belong to the Soul *by its ſelf*, are infinitely greater than thoſe which come by the interpoſition of the Body. Laſtly, 'tis very eaſie to comprehend why the Senſes and the Heart judge otherwiſe: Theſe being bodily Faculties, we need not wonder they hold clearly for bodily things. As for the Senſes, this is without diſpute, they are corporeal, both in their Organs and in their Operations: they perceive only the Superficies of Bodies. This is no leſs true of the Heart, it is corporeal too; for I underſtand by the Heart, the ſeat of the Paſſions, and the Imagination: 'tis very evident, that both theſe Faculties are bodily Faculties. For the Imagination is the ſeat wherein are repreſented thoſe Images that come from the Senſes and offer themſelves to our Mind in the abſence of Objects. The Paſſions alſo are corporeal, becauſe they are formed by *Mechanical Movements*: This is manifeſt by theſe Characters they impreſs upon the Body, as the motion of the Blood, quick, ſlow, or precipitate; Paleneſs or Ruddineſs of Complexion; the Fire and languiſhing, which they impreſs upon the eyes. The Senſes and Heart, which are corporeal, being the Gates whereat Objects do enter and accoſt the mind, bring nothing to it but bodily Images, and raiſe in it only ſenſual Pleaſures; and the Soul hereby gets an habit of believing there are no other Pleaſures beſides theſe, ſince it does not endeavour to diſingage it ſelf from the Body, and to taſte others. But can it be poſſible we ſhould be ſuch enemies to our ſelves, and ſo irrational, as to believe our Senſes touching a thing of ſo great Importance? The Senſes are unable to know the thouſandth part of Bodies. As ſoon as ever a Body ceaſes to have a conſiderable Extenſion, we ceaſe to ſee and feel it; and would we

we make theſe very Senſes to be judges of things abſolutely Spiritual? Certainly, the Soul is very unhappy and very much a Slave, if it cannot taſte that Pleaſure which is its ſovereign Felicity, but it muſt be beholden to the Body for it. If *Matter* be the Spring of true Pleaſure, what do thoſe Souls do, I wonder, that are ſeparated from Matter? what muſt be the Beatitude of Angels, that have no Body? Is it not true, that their Pleaſures ought to be as far above ours, as Minds are above Matter? Aſſuredly, ſpiritual Pleaſures ſpring from the knowledge of Truth, from the practiſe of Virtue, from our union with God by the tyes of Love, and from that Action, whereby God unites himſelf immediately to our Soul. All this is intirely above the Senſes: they are not acquainted with Truth; for their Office is to report the Appearances of Bodies: They cannot judge of Virtue; it is not under their Juriſdiction: much leſs can they judge of that Union betwixt God and the Soul. And yet, although they make no report to us about any of theſe things, we are not nevertheleſs to doubt of the real Impreſſions they make upon our Souls.

But, from whence comes it, *ſay ſome*, that ſpiritual Pleaſures are not ſo touching and make not ſuch ſtrong Impreſſions upon the Soul, as bodily ones doe? For you ſee not, *ſay they*, your devout People in thoſe Tranſports of Joy and Pleaſure, as we ſee men have in the injoyment of Senſual Pleaſures. Is not this a proof that thoſe intellectual pleaſures are merely imaginary, or at leaſt that they are very weak and languiſhing. This difficulty ariſes from that men know not how to diſtinguiſh the Soul from the body: they believe it is concern'd in proportion to the greatneſs of the agitations of the Bodily Organs: They are perſuaded, that it cannot receive an impreſſion of Joy, but by the interpoſal of theſe great corporeal motions. But the thing is far otherwiſe: 'tis certain, that in the great Pleaſures, which the Soul receives from the Body, the great

great corporeal Agitations re'ncounter one another, and it receives not those pleasures but by favour of these agitations, and because the Bloud and Spirits are in a great heat and ferment: But the Pleasures of holy Persons, which are lock'd up in the Soul it self, and which exert no external Characters, do not fail to make very powerful Impression. These Pleasures are so great and so touching, that they carry the Soul out of the World: And the Joy, which springs from the possession of God, from the Knowledge of his Truth, and the imitation of his Vertues and Attributes, must needs infinitely transcend all the pleasures of the Body: Since that for these spiritual pleasures, we not only renounce bodily ones, but also expose our selves to all, even the most sensible pains. True it is, the more the Soul is accustomed to let its self be moved by the Agitations, which do cause corporeal Pleasures and Passions, the more is it uncapable of tasting Internal joys and spiritual Pleasures. And this is one of the greatest mischiefs that spring from the continual use of sensuality: the Soul waxeth fat, as the holy Ghost speaketh: the heart of the Wicked is fat as grease; he hath prophaned the Rock of his Salvation. It covers its self, as it were, with flesh and bloud, and tastes nothing, but what flatters this Flesh and Bloud. And therefore among sensual Pleasures, there are permitted our Devout Person only those which are moderate. The Senses love to receive strong impressions of Objects, provided there be no wound in the case; the imagination loves also to be powerfully moved: But all these emotions make such mighty impressions upon the Soul, as it hardly can come to it self again: And therefore they ought carefully to be avoided.

But if we would have more sensible proofs, that the heart, the passions and the senses are not to be consulted

ed about the choice of Pleaſures; let us hear experience, and caſt an eye upon the diſorders of the world. Such are, the conſequences of this blindneſs in men, who follow their own heart and ſenſes in the choice of Goods and Pleaſures. Why did the firſt Woman lay hold on the forbidden fruit? becauſe it was good and pleaſant to the eye, ſhe hearkened to her Heart and Senſes. How did corruption ariſe to that high pitch in the World, that it forced God's Juſtice to bring upon it a terrible Deluge? Becauſe the Sons of God ſaw the Daughters of men that they were fair: they ſtopt their Ears to the voice of God, which call'd upon them; they heark'ned to the ſollicitations of their own ſenſual heart: they took them Wives, of all which they choſe, and corrupted themſelves with them. Did not *David* commit Adultery and Murder in a little time, becauſe he gave ear to his ſenſes and heart, and let his paſſions ſeduce him? did not *Solomon* become an Idolater, becauſe his ſinful love for Women having blinded his eyes, ſeparated him from God, and ſtopt the Ears of his Soul: ſo as his mind heard only the voice of his Paſſions and his Senſes? Laſtly, did not St. *Peter* deny his Lord and Maſter; for that his heart, his ſenſes, his imagination made him ſee preſent Death in an affrightful poſture, and he conſulted neither God nor his own reaſon?

We ſeem here to blend and confound Innocence with Sin, in ſpeaking of our Heart and our Senſes, as common Sources of our errours: Since that the Senſes may ſeem rather to be unhappy and unfortunate than Criminal and Sinful. True, the Senſes are ſubject to two unhappineſſes. The firſt is, to be forced to receive Objects which are ſinful, and capable of tranſferring Images of corruption to the Heart; ſuch are evil Examples, ſcandalous Actions and Words. The other misfortune of the Senſes is, that they take in innocent

nocent Objects, and ſometimes in an innocent manner; and theſe Images do ſpoyl and corrupt themſelves in the Heart. Nevertheleſs, I think we ought not to ſeparate the Senſes from the Heart, they make but one and the ſame thing. This is a Match at the end of which lies a great heap of Gun-powder. The Heart and the Imagination are the inward extremity of this Match; they are the Magazine of Powder: The Senſes are the other end, to which the Objects ſet fire. This Fire ſlides, or rather it flies along the Match: It enkindles the Imagination, and puts the Heart into a flame: And therefore the holy Spirit puts for the ſame thing, *To walk in the ways of ones heart, and in the ſight of ones Eyes.*

In ſhort, if we would be perfectly aſſured that our Heart and Senſes are evil Counſellors in this affair, hear what the holy Scripture ſaith; it conſiders our Heart as the root of all our Evils. *Every imagination of the thoughts of Man's heart is only evil continually. The Heart is deceitful above all things and deſperately wicked; who can know it? Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Theſts, falſe Witneſs, Blaſphemies: Theſe are the things which defile a Man.* The holy Ghoſt repreſents the Heart to us, as blind, wrapt up in a thick Cloud and profound darkneſs: it ſpeaks of it, as of a kind of Death, it is of the Earth, it is carnal. How then can an Heart thus compoſed and fram'd judge of the true Goods and Pleaſures? How can there come any thing good from a poyſoned Spring. And thus we ſee that the Wiſe man puts this Maxime among the members of thoſe we are to deteſt and abominate; *Walk in the ways of thine Heart and in the ſight of thine Eyes.*

I ſhould end here, were it unneceſſary to take off one Scandal that may be taken at what we have ſaid, that ſenſual Pleaſure is a *Good*, and even a Good for the Soul: For, in a word, if the Soul, be that not only which

which perceives, and which taſtes Pleaſure, and if Pleaſure be a Good, 'tis a Good of the Soul. If it be a good, then ſome will ſay, we are to ſeek and love it. It's not ſufficient to anſwer that this is a Good of the Body only, that is not abſolutly true: 'tis, in ſome ſort the good of the Soul, becauſe the Soul taſtes it. Further, if this Good were only for the Body, yet it does not follow, it ſhould therefore be of neceſſity unlawful; ſince we are not always forbidden to ſeek the Good of the Body. But we ought not only to conſider a thing in its ſelf, to know whether it be good or bad; we muſt conſider it in its cauſes and its effects, in what precedes it, what may be the conſequence of it. I mean, that the Pleaſure which comes to the Soul by the Body, is a ſort of Good conſidered in it ſelf. Look upon its Source, and ſee to what it produces. The Source is Sin, is Impurity, is Rebellion againſt the law of our Creator. What it produces is a diſunion between God and our Soul: 'tis a pawning our ſelves to Death, 'tis the pain of everlaſting burnings. How can we under the *Idea* of a Good conceive a thing which is incompaſt about by ſo many moral Impurities and ſuch real Miſchiefs? If therefore, bodily Pleaſure can be called a Good with reſpect to the preſent ſentiment of the Soul, it's an Evil in all other regards; it's an Evil to ſpeak Abſolutely: and therefore the wiſeſt men of all Ages, have plac'd it among the falſe Goods: for a true Good ought to be good on every ſide we view it.

The Soul then has no true Pleaſure but what ariſes from its union with God. And this union is fortified according to the meaſure that we looſen our ſelves from ſenſible things, and are united to God by the knowledge of his Truth: Not of thoſe Verities which Philoſophy ſeeks after, and never finds with any certainty, but of thoſe Divine truths which Faith diſcovers to us of thoſe wholſome Verities, which are the Candle

of

of the Soul. *Thy Word is a Lamp to my Feet, and a light to my Paths. It enlightens the Eyes and makes wise the ſimple.* The ſecond Bond, whereby we are united to God, is *Virtue*; the Practice of which renders us like to our Creator; renews his Image in us, and makes us to be the Copies of that Beauty whereof he's the original. The third cord is the love, with which we love God, and that by which we are beloved of him. By this Love he is in us, and we are in him; becauſe Love makes a tranſfuſion of Hearts, and the Soul is more in the *Subject*, which it loves, than in that which it animates. As to the pleaſures which ſpring from this union, it is of the number of thoſe things, which cannot be conceiv'd without they be felt. 'Tis ſuch, that all the Pleaſures of the World appear unſavoury, to them that taſte it. 'Tis ſo great as it hath often made the Saints to fall down, who have been extraordinarily touch'd with its holy Extaſies and Raviſhments, which ſeem'd to have entirely broke the Alliance betwixt the Body and the Soul. Now without queſtion it is, that Devotion contributes and leads to this Pleaſure. It diminiſhes our union with ſenſual things; diſunites us from our Body; lifts us up to God; purifies our Souls in drawing nigh to him; makes them partake of the Beams of that great Sun of righteouſneſs; and renders them as ſo many little Gods, by communicating with the Glory of our great God.

Meditation.

NO wonder thou ſeekeſt Pleaſure, O my Soul: thou ſeekeſt thy Good; thou ſeekeſt what thou haſt loſt, thou ſeekeſt what was given thee, what thou once hadſt, and what thou ſhouldeſt have ſtill, hadſt thou continued innocent. Thy God created

ated thee righteous and holy: This holineſs was the bond of his union with thee: thou wert ſeparated from him, when thou becameſt ſinfull, and thorough this ſeparation thou haſt continued void and deprived of Pleaſure and Happineſs. Every where thou ſeekeſt the Good thou haſt loſt: but blind as thou art, thou catcheſt at Shadows for real Bodies. Thou wandereſt upon different Objects, and if thou findeſt any one that flatters thee, ſtraightway thou embraceſt it with ardour, as if thou hadſt found that which thou haſt loſt, and ſeekeſt for. Thou diſabuſeſt thy ſelf in a little time, but it is to fall into an other Errour: After having taſted bodily Pleaſure, thou perceiveſt that this is not the infinite Pleaſure thou ſeartheſt after. This Object being quitted, thou doſt caſt thy ſelf upon another: thou embraceſt this too, and every day thou delighteſt to be fed with new and new Illuſions. Leave off, O my heart, leave off rambling and running after theſe Fantoms: Be not decieved by thy Senſes and Imagination Embrace thy God; 'tis to him alone thou oweſt this general Inclination, which makes thee to love Felicity and Pleaſure: but thy blinded Eyes make thee love

falſe

falſe Gods, and fix themſelves upon falſe Pleaſures. If thou wert not profoundly blind thou could'ſt not doubt that God is infinite, that he is infinitely good, and infinitely better than all the Creatures. Thou could'ſt not alſo doubt but the pleaſure which comes from Union with him and the Poſſeſſion of him, is infinitely greater than all the Pleaſures of the World beſides. If the created Goods be ſo ſweet, how agreeable muſt the *increated* Good be? The *Good* which is the Creator of all Goods? the *Good* which comprehends the pleaſure of all other Goods? the *Good* which diſplays thoſe Delights in our Hearts, that are as far above all Pleaſures, as he himſelf is eminent above all Goods? Herein thou art incredulous, O my Soul, becauſe thou haſt not reliſh'd the ſweetneſs, which ſprings from being united with God: thou canſt not believe them, thou ſay'ſt with *Thomas*, Except I ſhould ſee, except I touch and feel thoſe Delights, I will not believe. Ah! how happy and bleſt is he, who has believ'd before he hath ſeen, who has overcome all the temptations of the Fleſh, and has deſired to taſte thoſe divine Pleaſures before he taſted them. But that Perſon is incomparably more happy

hat hath believed and hath ſeen, that hath
ſted thoſe Delights and felt thoſe Plea-
ures which ſurpaſs all underſtanding, which
ring from the intimate preſence of God.
thou haſt not yet been able, O my Soul,
feel ſuch ſpiritual Pleaſures, the reaſon
thy God could not yet apply himſelf im-
ediately to thee, becauſe of the Impurity
herewith thou art cover'd and defiled:
r his Eyes are pure, they cannot behold
iquity: he is Purity and Light it ſelf, and
ou art enwrapt in a dark Cloud of Igno-
nce and Unrighteouſneſs. How then
uld God joyn himſelf immediately to
ee? Therefore take away thy Veil, this
all of Separation: cure thy own igno-
nces; ſeek after the Knowledge of thy
od and his Myſteries: purifie thy ſelf:
t rid of thoſe ill Habits of Vice which
round thee like a Garment, and thy God
ill inveſt thee with a Robe of Light; and
en ſhalt thou perceive, that the applying
nſible Objects to thy faculties is not capable
raiſing in thee that Senſe of Pleaſure
hich thou mayſt receive from God: Then
ilt thou have a perfect diſguſt to thoſe vain
leaſures; thou wilt wiſh to ſee thy God,
know him, to embrace him, that thou
ayſt be united to him. *Prayer.*

Prayer.

O *Father of Lights, inexhauſtible ſpring of Pleaſure and Joy! inſinuate thy ſelf into all the Faculties of my Soul; fill up the emptineſs of my deſires, and that vaſt extenſion of my Heart, and make me to feel that Joy which thou communicateſt to thy Saints and Favorites. Unto thee I diſcover my wants; I confeſs my Nothing; I languiſh after thee, my True Good. Without thee, O Lord, I ſhould be the moſt miſerable of all Creatures; I ſhould be plunged into an Abyſs of Grief and Deſpair, I ſhould feel nothing but horror and anguiſh: Thou comforteſt me in this Valley of Tears; thou feedeſt me with the bread of Angels, and makeſt me drink of thy Pleaſures, as out of a River. The World is not acquainted with theſe delights; the meats of thy Table to it are inſipid, it taſtes nothing but* the Fleſh-pots of Egypt, *and knows not what is* the Honey of the Land of Promiſe. *I know it, O my God, but I do not know ſo as I would, and ought to know. I have learn'd of thy Saints, that when thou ſpeakeſt to thy children in their hearts, this Sentiment is ſweeter than Honey and the Honey-comb; and that more pleaſure is to be found in poſſeſſing thee, than the covetous find in having the greateſt abundance of Gold and Silver. But alas! my*

Soul

Soul hath not yet felt thoſe divine Tranſports. I begin to perceive, that earthly Pleaſures are uncapable of ſatisfying that hunger and thirſt after pleaſure and happineſs whereof I labour: but I have not as yet perfectly learn'd that thou alone art capable of quenching that thirſt. Taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is: *I taſte thee as I ſee thee; I ſee thee but imperfectly, and as in a Glaſs, I taſte thee as covered from me. Over thee indeed are no involving incumbrances, for thou art all pure and ſingle, and whoſoever is pure, may taſte thee purely: But the veil is in my Fleſh, or rather it is my Fleſh it ſelf, it is my corruption, that ſeparates me from thee.* Come therefore Lord *Jeſus*, come thou creating Spirit, and Creator *of Spirits, create in me a new Heart, and renew a right Spirit within me, that my Soul may be filled with thy Delights, and I may taſte all the ſweetneſs of thy Love. Thirſty I am after Pleaſure; open thy Fountain of eternal Pleaſures, and let thy Rivers flow into my Soul. Kiſs me with the kiſſes of thy Mouth, for thy Love is better than Wine. Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou makeſt* thy Flocks *to reſt at noon: For why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy companions? Why ſhould my Soul wander amidſt the vain Pleaſures of the World,*

and why ſhould it bring to thee ſo many falſe Goods for companions? Let me retire under thy ſhadow, embrace, adore, love thee only, and taſte no Pleaſure but what is in thee. Draw me therefore, that I may run after thee: draw near to me, that I may be able to draw near to thee. Prevent me by thy Grace, by thy Mercy, and by the bowels of thy Compaſſion, ſtirred up for a prodigal and rambling Son, who ſeeks but cannot find thee. Awake, O North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out: Let my beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant Fruits. O Holy Spirit, *thou South-wind, the Father of Heat, Author of Generation, Source of Love and Charity, blow upon the Powers of my Soul, which are as a Deſart, make them an Eden, a Garden of the Almighty; make odoriferous Plants to grow there, produce there Habits and Works of a ſweet odour; ſo as my heavenly Saviour, the beloved of my Soul, may come and taſte the ſweetneſs of thoſe Fruits, that he may delight in me, and I in him, and that we may eternally taſte all thoſe Pleaſures, the products of a mutual Love.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

That young People have no Priviledge to uſe ſenſual Pleaſures, nor to diſpence themſelves from Devotion.

ONE Reflection is ſtill behind, which we are obliged to make before we leave this Important Subject; we having done nothing yet in regard to young People. They perſuade 'emſelves, it may be, that whatever hath bin ſay'd does not concern them: it is almoſt impoſſible to deliver them from this Errour, That Pleaſure is peculiarly their ſhare, and that, without Tyranny, we cannot deny it them. To them Indevotion is natural, and they reckon it a particular Honour. We ſhould make fine work of it (ſay they) to become *Bigots* at theſe years, they fancy that Modeſty, Wiſdom, Sobriety, and Temperance, are not proper for them; 'tis the buſineſs of old Men, ſay they, we muſt not make our ſelves ridiculous by turning *Cato*'s and *Seneca*'s. And indeed if any one of them has more happy Inclinations, he is aſham'd, he diſſembles 'em, he follows the Crowd. They tell him, *to every thing under the Heaven there is a time.* In conſidering old and young men, we can never believe, ſay they, that Perſons ſo different are deſtin'd to the ſame Actions: The wrinkled forehead of old Age, the paleneſs of it's Complexion, hollow Eyes, chap-fallen Mouth, and Limbs all trembling, have a correſpondence with the Duties of Repentance, and it's fit that they pour forth Tears and give themſelves up to Mortification. But the good diſpoſition and plumpneſs of Youth, that flouriſh of Blood, that diſplays it's ſelf upon the Complexion, lively and ſparkling Eyes, Senſes eager and capable to be toucht by their Objects, very manifeſtly ſhew, that this age is born for pleaſures and all manner

of Joy. Thus it is, they flatter and hug themſelves in their ſecurity. Not only young People talk at this rate, but moſt part of mankind agree with them in it. I cannot deny, but that the extravagancies and diſorders of conduct in the life of an old man impreſs much greater marks of infamy, than the debauches of the younger ſort. I muſt confeſs alſo, that the diſorders of old age diſcover a greater depth of Corruption. It cannot caſt it's faults upon the firſt boylings of the Blood, which hath much filth and ſcum: It cannot take the default of Experience for excuſe, and, in ſhort, it breaks the barriers of a ſhame much greater than that which follows the crimes of Youth. But nevertheleſs, God will not judge men according to humane Rules and the Sentiments of the World: there is no Age, that has receiv'd a diſpenſation from obeying God. All the violaters of his Law ſhall be puniſht, ſince his Commandments are given to all; and if ſo be the difference of Age put a diverſity in ſins in reſpect of Puniſhment, this would only in the upſhot go upon the More and the Leſs: But what will that reſult to; ſeeing, in a word, even the leſs unhappy muſt have their ſhare in Eternal fires, and the Worm that never dyeth?

Why ſhould young people be leſs obliged to Devotion? Has God given them leſs? On the contrary, they, as well as old men, have received of God their Being and Reaſon: but farther, they have vigour of Body, force of Wit, Health, Youth, and the flower of Age. Aſſuredly, theſe are particular Obligations to devote themſelves to God All theſe advantages they have not receiv'd to conſecrate them to the Devil of Luſt and Voluptuouſneſs. Is any thing too good for God? They deſign for him a tatter'd body, putrified Lungs, gloomy Eyes, and dry Members. In truth, God will be mightily oblig'd to them: they would give him the bottom Lees of their years, and conſecrate

to

to him that Age which is the ſink of Life, and the Center of all Miſeries: that is to ſay, they would give him, what the World has caſt off: they act like covetous men, who are only liberal when they are dying: they give what they can retain no more. Believe me, all the very beſt we have is not too good for our God. Heretofore he would not have *Victimes* that had any fault, that were ill or in no good caſe, or that had loſt any part of the Body. Do we believe he will be pleas'd to accept the Sacrifices of a ſpent and waſted heart, and a man, who is only the ſhadow of what he was once? *I exhort you, that ye preſent your Bodies a living Sacrifice.* But young People, that take up the reſolution of being devout, when they can be no longer ſinners, promiſe God their dead and (as it were corrupted) Bodies: for in old age, Bodies are like Phantoms, and come near to the nature of Carkaſſes. God has thought nothing too good for us; he has given himſelf for us; he who is the ſovereign good, has given us his Son: he devoted him to death for us in the flower of his age; and it is juſt that we be devoted to his ſervice in all our Ages.

God is not ſatisfied with theſe promiſes of futurity, *I will give thee.* He would have us ſpeak in the preſent tenſe, I do give thee; as he does himſelf in ſpeaking to us, *I give you my Peace.* He is called, He who is, was, and is to come: So that to him appertain all the differences of time, the paſt, preſent, future: but among theſe he loves the preſent time, and he ſays, *I am what I am*, or, he who is, and not, he who ſhall be. He that would be like God, and pleaſe him, muſt ſpeak as he does: I am he that is righteous, holy, ſeparate from ſinners, devoted to God, conſecrated to his Service.

Heretofore God required our firſt-fruits, and the firſt born of our Herds, and likewiſe of our Children. *Abraham* roſe betimes in the morning to go and ſacri-

fice his Son, and God commanded that an immortal Fire ſhould burn in his Temple for the perpetual Sacrifice of Morning as well as Evening. This ſignifies, God would be ſerved firſt, and our *Firſts* are to be conſecrated to him; he wills not we ſhould ſay to him, *Come and follow me*, if the World leaves any thing remaining thou ſhalt have it. He loves not thoſe People that ſay unto him, Let us firſt do ſuch a thing, or go to ſuch a place, *&c.* He anſwers them, Let the dead bury their dead, come ye and follow me. For having put your hands to the Plough, if ye look back ye are not fit for the Kingdom of God.

Few perſons there are but confeſs, That one time or other in ones Life it is neceſſary to think on God; They only diſpute about the time. One ſays, I will become a good Chriſtian when I have finiſh'd my Houſe; another, when I have made my Fortune; and young People ſay, when we are old and have taſted the pleaſures of Life: in a word, All remit this great Affair to Futurity. Since they confeſs that 'tis of abſolute neceſſity to give up themſelves to God, and that without this, Hell and Death eternal are inevitable; is it not the greateſt Fury and Madneſs to deal thus, and to remit an Affair of ſo great Importance to the time to come, whereof we can in no wiſe be aſſured? Young People, you Idolaters of Pleaſure, make uſe of the Example of the rich man, who ſaid in the Evening to his Soul, Eat, drink, and be merry, thou haſt laid up Goods for many years; when that very Night, that Soul to which he had given ſuch bad Counſel, was required of him. Who has given you Aſſurances that you ſhall arrive to old Age? Or have ye made a Treaty with God, that in what Eſtate ſoever Death ſhall ſurpriſe you Heaven ſhall receive you. If Death re'ncounters you, cover'd with Vices, coming from a Comedy at the Theatre, or from a Debauch at the Tipling-houſe, or any place more infamous, Do

ye

ye believe ye are in a good Condition to ſay at the Gate of Heaven, Lord, Lord, open unto us? It will be anſwer'd, Go, I know you not, ye Workers of Iniquity: Ye will ſay, without doubt, We have ſinned againſt Heaven and againſt thee, we are not worthy to be called thy Sons; but ſpare us, and impute all our Sins to our Youth. This will do nothing; God cannot in favour of Youth diſannul that irrevocable Edict, Nothing impure can enter into my Holy City.

The *Jewiſh* Doctors, who frequently happen to ſay very good things, ſay, Remember thy God, and turn to him only one day before thy Death. This is extraordinarily well ſaid: think therefore of thy God to day, for to morrow perhaps thou ſhalt dye. What do we do then when we diſpoſe of the time to come, and ſay, To morrow we will ſet upon ſuch a ſort of Pleaſure, the day after we will act a Debauch, we will live in this manner for fifty or ſixty years, and after that we will think of a Retreat to God? Truly, we imitate thoſe ambitious and viſionary Princes, who, upon the only hope of making Conqueſts, divide before-hand the Provinces, and diſpoſe of the Governments which are none of their own. To whom belongs the time to come? Without doubt, to God only, who holds it as in Store-houſes, and lets it run as pleaſeth him, who ſtops its Source, or prolongs its Current: ſo that when we diſtribute the time to come, we take upon us to beſtow what is Gods and none of our own, and which perhaps never will be; and yet we deſtine and divide it before-hand to ſundry uſes. And this is the utmoſt Folly, even in the opinion of the World, and noted by many Proverbs that are very well known.

Since therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary to devote our ſelves to God, is it not to be done when it is moſt eaſie? And I maintain, it's eaſier to love God and be converted to him when we are young, than in old

Age. This ſeems to be a Paradox, becauſe in that Age the Blood boils, the Fleſh is vigorous, and Sin ſticks to the Entrails. We have a peculiar and ſovereign taſte in all worldly Pleaſures. True indeed; when once we have let the Reins looſe to Concupiſcence in our Youth, it is well nigh impoſſible to ſtop its impetuous Paſſion and Fury. It ought to dry up the Springs, that it may put an end to theſe Diſorders. But if in good time we turn our Souls to God, and to Devotion, it is ſure, we ſhall improve therein incomparably much better than in old Age: to what thing oever young Men are carried, they are carried to it with Violence and Ardour. 'Tis the Temper of that Age; if there be a good Conduct made of thoſe firſt Fires, there will thence ariſe an excellent *Zeal*, and an holy fervour of Devotion, as we ſee in them who know how to make a right uſe, and ſerve themſelves of the Rapidneſs of Torrents and Rivers, to turn Mills and Machines of great advantage to the Life of Mankind. On the contrary, Experience teaches us, that Devotion relents and ſlackens with Age, and old men are more put to it to chaſen and heat their Hearts in pious Duties: their Soul is hard'ned, 'tis not touch'd nor moved with ſo much eaſe, becauſe it is not ſo tender as it was, the fire of Zeal ſeeming to be diminiſh'd by the diminution of natural heat.

Whence come the Difficulties we meet withal in the work of Converſion? Certainly, none of them there are but what augment and encreaſe with Age. This difficulty of thinking on God proceeds from Cuſtom and Habit. Now Cuſtom by Age becomes a Tyrant: it comes from the Devil; and when once it has eſtabliſh'd its Tyranny by a long *Poſſeſſion*, 'tis almoſt impoſſible to deſtroy it. At firſt it comes alone by it ſelf, but in a little while it is call'd *Legion*, and ſuch a Devil as cannot be conjur'd out by a *Get thee behind me* Satan, and cannot be chaſed away but by Prayer and

and Faſting. Again, our Faculties are us'd to it, and the Soul loſes its ſtrength, it is no longer capable of a Deſign and Enterprize ſo vigorous, as to turn to God and break with Sin. In ſhort, this Difficulty proceeds from that God leaves off calling upon, and inviting and offering his Grace; and his Patience is changed into a juſt Fury and Indignation when it has been a long time abus'd.

But above all, let us conſider how ſtrong the Habits of Luxury and Debauchery do become when we permit them to take Root, and let 'em arrive even to old Age. The young Plant which might be pluck'd up with one hand, is now a trunck of immenſe Greatneſs, which reſiſts the Hatchet and Wedge. This little Monſter, the love of Voluptuouſneſs, which might have been eaſily ſtifled at its Birth, is become ſo great and ſo terrible, as there is now no attacking nor fighting with it. Sins ſimply conſidered, do not become more ſtrong by Age, their number is multiplied. Theſe are Snow-Balls, that wax bigger and bigger in rowling: theſe are Torrents, which ſwell bigger the farther they remove from their Spring-head: 'twas an eaſie matter at firſt to paſs over them on foot, but now one cannot croſs them by ſwimming. Now the number of multiplied Sins augments the difficulty of Devotion and Converſion. We read in the Life of the Holy Fathers, That an Angel made one of thoſe ſolitary Inhabitants of the Deſart to ſee in a Viſion an old Man, that cut Wood in the Foreſt, to get a Burthen for his Back, with deſign to carry them away. When the Fardle was extreamly big he eſſay'd to lift it up upon himſelf; but finding it too heavy, he let it fall to the ground, and fell a cutting new Wood, and added it to his Burthen; whereupon, he endeavoured again to lift it up, but that was more impoſſible for him than before. Nevertheleſs, it tumbling down again he put more Wood to it ſtill: and this he did ſeveral

times. The ſolitary Perſon admir'd the Folly of this old Man, till the Angel took up his Speech, and ſaid, Thou ſee'ſt this old Man, he is the Emblem of Worldlings, they heap Sins upon Sins; a deſign of lifting themſelves up to God comes acroſs; preſently they ſink under the burthen of their Sins: They begin again to commit new Crimes, as if this burthen by encreaſing would become much lighter. When they have puſh'd on their Exceſſes a good way, a new deſire of devoting themſelves to God overtakes them, but the burthen of their Sins is become very great, and conſequently the motions of Elevation are the more difficult. This *Parable* was compoſed for our Subject, and againſt thoſe unhappy People that dedicate their youthful years to the Pleaſures of the World, and remit the practiſe of Devotion, and the lifting up of their Souls to God to another time.

St *Auſtin*, in expounding the Hiſtory of *Lazarus* his Reſurrection, asks, why our Lord employs Sighs, Tears, Prayers, and a loud voice to raiſe him again from the dead, which he did not do for the others, whom he reviv'd? as for the young man of *Naim*, whoſe biere he toucht only, and *Jairus*'s Daughter, to whom he only ſaid, *Talitha Cumi*, Maid, ariſe. 'Tis ſays he, becauſe *Lazarus* had been dead four days. Our Lord would give us an Image of the Difficulty to be met withall in a ſinners Converſion, when he is confirm'd in his ſin. The firſt day, ſays that Father, is that of Pleaſure which we taſte in the ſin. The ſecond is that of Conſent. The third is that of Love and Application to the pleaſure of the ſin: and the fourth is mere Cuſtom and Habit. When we are come to this, we cannot be raiſed again, we cannot be converted to God but by Cries and Tears, and the Voice of the Lord fruitful in Miracles. This, methinks, makes us comprehend well the intereſt we have to think on God in due time, and to conſecrate our Youth to Devotion. I know

know very well, that the end obtains the Crown, but I know too, that 'tis of the highest importance to begin well, that we may end happily. An Arrow which wanders and slides from towards the Butt, just as it parts from the Bow, will be found at a monstrous distance from the Butt before it comes to its journeys end. One, that in his youth is plung'd into debauchery, and abandons himself to sensual pleasures, will find himself far remov'd from God in his old age, he must take a great deal of trouble to bring himself back again from such an Aloof. And therefore, I conclude with the wise man, *Young man, Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth.*

Meditation.

WHY dost thou delay, O my Soul, after these Considerations? Dost not thou apprehend the necessity there is of consecrating thy self, without any shifting, or lingring, to the service of thy God? Thou evermore sayest, to morrow, to morrow, but this morrow never comes, and the day of thy Separation from the body will come in an hour when thou lookest not for it. When thy God calls upon thee, thou tellest him the Words of a slothful and sleepy Person. *Presently, I say, presently, let me alone a little, but one Moment longer: but this presently never comes, and this Moment is an everlasting one.* St. *August. Confes.* l. 8. cap. 5. I see thou art displeas'd at obliging thee to give up thy self so soon to God. This is too soon, say'st thou, to begin, and will it not be time enough some years hence? Wicked and ungrateful, canst thou think too soon on thy God.? It is just, thou shouldst think of him assoon as thou beginnest to be, and to know thy self, since he thought on thee and thy Salvation from Eternity. His Essence had no beginning, and his Love for thee had none too; Both Eternal. What didst thou do to this great God to engage him to love thee

thee ſo long a while before? He lov'd thee before thou waſt amiable. He ſaw thee in thy Nothing, and in the Abyſſe of thy Corruption, and from all Eternity he prepared means for thee to get out of that Abyſſe, he prepared thee a Redeemer. He did not reſerve one moment in Eternity which he has not given thee; and thou would'ſt retrench from him many years of this ſhort and uncertain Life, whereof thou haſt the uſe here below. Perhaps thou wilt ſay, that it would not be unjuſt if thy time were divided betwixt thy God and thee, and that it is hard to give all one hath, without reſerving any thing to ones ſelf. But doſt not thou conſider, that thy God has given thee all things? He has given thee the Heaven and the Earth, the Fields, Rivers, Fountains, Plants, Trees, and Fruits; hath he reſerv'd any thing to himſelf? Has not he given himſelf too entirely to thee? has he not given thee his only Son; and ſtill, has not he given him up to Death it ſelf for thee? wouldſt not thou then be very ungrateful, O my ſoul, if thou wouldſt divide with God, and rob him of any thing which thou haſt? But alas, when thou thinkeſt and ſpeakeſt thus, thou doſt not well underſtand thy own intereſts. Thou ſuppoſeſt, that thou loſeſt from thy ſelf all the time thou giveſt to thy God, whereas, on the other ſide, thou ſaveſt only thoſe moments from ſhip-wrack, which thou conſecrateſt to him: All the reſt of thy time is loſt, being confounded in that mighty abyſſe of what is paſt: But the Moments, thou giveſt to thy God, are put in reſerve, thou wilt find them, they will come before thee; At the great Judgment they will be put to thy account, and for ſome moments of Devotion thou ſhalt receive eternal Glory. Do not therefore hang in ſuſpence any longer, O my Soul; delay no more to renounce all the pleaſures and all the hopes of the *Age*, for to follow thy God only. In him is the Well of Life; in his Light thou ſhalt ſee Light: thou ſhalt be ſated

with

with the fat of his Houſe, and quench thy thirſt in the Floud of his Pleaſures. In thy old age thou ſhalt not regret the loſs of thy Youth. Thy days ſhall not riſe up in Judgment againſt thee to condemn thee, when thou ſhalt be old and on the brink of Death: The thought of thy God ſhall not put thee into an affright; Thou wilt not look upon him as a Judge, who comes to demand an account of ſo many years conſumed in vain Pleaſures, but a Deliverer who will come to break thy Irons, and as a Rewarder bringing days of Refreſhment, inſtead of painful and dolorous years which the World would make thee paſs thorough.

Prayer.

O *Moſt gracious and merciful Lord, thou Guide of my Youth, thou Light to the blind, thou Inſtructer of the ignorant, who enlighteneſt the ſimple, bringeſt back thoſe that have wandered into the way of Truth, and perfecteſt praiſe out of the mouth of Babes and Suck-lings, teach me thy ways, and draw me out of the paths of the World: make haſte, that I may do ſo too: leave me not any longer in the World and in Sin. By the effuſion of thy Grace into my Soul, make my Heart to deſire thee, that in deſiring thee it may ſeek thee, and in ſeeking thee it may find thee, in finding thee it may love thee, and in loving thee it may find in that love a ſovereign Joy. It is now too long a time; I have conſumed my ſelf in my vain deſires. I would go to thee, but I find not ſtrength to vanquiſh thoſe Habits wherein I am engaged by Cuſtom. Come therefore and tear me, O my God, out of the arms of Voluptuouſneſs; ſuffer not theſe delays of mine: and if I ſhould ſay, yet a little while, ſtay a little longer, draw me by thy Powerfull Word, and ſay unto me, Awaken thou that ſleepeſt, ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light. If words be not efficacious enough to raiſe me up, touch the biere, ſtrike the Body, wherein the Soul is, as it were, buried: It ſleepeth in its Tomb, or rather it is dead: bodily Pleaſures have overwhelm'd or ſlain it. Smite therefore*

the

the Body, that the Soul may awake; for it is better that I enter into Life having but one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into Hell-fire: It is better that my Flesh here below suffer some pains, and that my Soul one day taste those infinite Pleasures which thou prepareſt for it on high. I abide in Sodom, *and I love my abode: thou sendeſt thy Angels to draw me thence, thy Word and thy Miniſters to make me depart before the terrible day comes, in which thou wilt tumble down torrents of fire and brimſtone upon this wicked World: but I ever find pretexts to delay. Lay hold then of my hand, and draw me out by the force of thy Grace, that I periſh not among the wicked. Shew me the way of thy holy hill, that I may ſave my ſelf, and thence without danger behold the deluges of Corruption, which over-ſpread the Country, and the Torrents of thy Wrath and Vengeance, which ſuddenly and amazingly overwhelm the World. Alas! If it would pleaſe thee, O my God, to make me taſte the ſpiritual Delights of thy Love, I ſhould not be ſo ſenſible of Earthly Pleaſures, and I ſhould not linger ſo long to ſeek thee, for I moſt ardently wiſh after happineſs: If therefore I knew that my Beatitude lyes in thee, I ſhould flye to find in thee that happineſs which I ſeek. O Lord, ſince Pleaſure is the only Load-ſtone capable of drawing my Soul, make me taſte a little of that Joy which I ought to find in thee; make me to feel thy infinite Goodneſs, that without delay I may run after thee, and conſecrate my ſelf to thy ſervice, walking in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the dayes of my Life, and ſetting my Affections on things above, that when Chriſt, who is my Life and Pleaſure, ſhall appear, I may alſo appear with him in Glory.*

PART

PART IV.

Of helps towards Devotion.

CHAP. I.

The first General Advice is, to will, desire, and ask Devotion.

WE have seen from how many Sources Indevotion springs; let us now try to vanquish those Difficulties, by some Advices that may lead us to Devotion. Those Advices I would give here, are either general or particular. But before I pass further, we are to presuppose, that he whom we would make devout must have a Mind himself to become so: he that has not this Disposition will very unprofitably pass farther. How many indevout persons have we in the World, that do not desire Devotion for themselves, and contemn it in others? Of this sort we find some that are so hardy as to perswade themselves they have a Religion. I am, it may be, says one, as religious as another, though I laugh at Devotion and devout Persons. If they believe what they say, most assuredly they cheat their own Heart; and we must confess, that these People are really profane. Others there are that esteem Devotion in another, and yet like it not for themselves: it doth not fit right with the Spirit of the World, which they make their *Idol*. They approve the better side, they admire it, but they fancy, as to their own particular, they may be saved with less Trouble. I know not whether these be better than the former; yet they are a little nearer to the Disposition we seek after: but still, alas! in how bad a Condition is their Conscience?

ence? They are in this worse than the former, that they sin against their own Sentiment; they know their Masters Will, and do it not. They are afraid of doing too much; provided they be sav'd, it's of no great Importance how. What a thought is this! Is not Paradise worth the purchasing at the Expence of some Tears, some Prayers, some hours of Humiliation? And how can we imagine we can obtain Heaven by the less, since we shall find a hard Task to arrive thither by the greater? *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?* Do ye believe, ye backward and lukewarm Souls, that a truly devout Person has too much Righteousness to open to himself the gate of Heaven? Do not you know that all the World praises that Saying of St. *Austin, Woe to the most praise-worthy Life, if it be examined without Mercy*; and what the *Psalmist* says, *If thou should'st mark Iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* I speak of the Iniquities of the Righteous. If those truly devout Persons have not over-much Righteousness, you will strangely want it then who come so much behind them: but ye say, God will supply what is lacking; for this did Christ Jesus dye, that we might obtain his Grace and Favour in the midst of our Infirmities. But how do ye know that the Blessed *Jesus* would this, does not he do what liketh him best with his own? You ought therefore to take the surer side. What assurance have ye that God gives his Grace thus to those that slight it? Although you could do it, the mercy of the Lord will have employ enough; and your righteousness, though pusht on to the extremity of your strength, will still have need of Supplements to attain to Glory.

There are other Indevout People, which are still a little farther off than the former. They would have a good deal of Devotion, but they are not yet come to desire it; that is to say, the motions of their Will towards it are very

very imperfect. I would willingly become so (says one) but I cannot; the World bears me away, my Affairs wholly take me up, the temper and frame of my Body and Soul have not the necessary Turn for the practise of this Virtue; I do what I would not, and what I would that do I not; for the law of my members continues Mistress of the Law of my mind: they are not much afflicted at the not having that which they wish, and it is a certain proof that they wish it very feebly. In this Estate, how far from Perfection must the Conscience needs be! This is not to love God with all the Soul; this is to seek him with the least part of the heart, and to desire him with a most imperfect Will. To will Devotion at that rate is, to take the way never to obtain it: for the Soul does not surmount the difficulties but by heartning it self against them, and by acting with all its might and vigour. Judge then, if an Heart in this looseness can attain one of the most difficult things in the World. We have seen how many strong Passions ruine and destroy Devotion; the Love of the World, its Pleasures, and its Vexations. If to these passions, so violent and head-strong, you oppose, I know not what imperfect desires it is but the Fight of Dwarfs against Gyants.

So that the first general Counsel I give to attain Devotion, is, to desire it ardently. Some will say, that they who desire it, have it already: but that is no necessary conclusion. Some motions there are, whereof we are not the Masters, and oftentimes we passionately desire a thing we are not able to effect, although it depend upon our Will. Most terrible is the tyranny of Habits, and the cords of Sin are difficult to break. St. *Austin* most divinely paints out to us the motion of such a Soul, as would elevate it self to God but cannot; "I panted after the liberty of thinking only on thee, "O my God, but I sighed, being still tyed up, not by "foreign Chains, but by those of my own will, which were

" were harder than Iron. The Devil held it in his " Power; he had bound it faſt. I had a Will to " ſerve thee with the pureſt Love, and to enjoy thee, " O my God, in whom alone is to be found a ſolid " and true Joy; but this new Will, which was but " ſtill-born, was not capable of conquering that other " which had fortified it ſelf by a long habit in Sin. Behold the Picture of a Chriſtian Soul, that wiſhes to be truly devout, would only think on God and love him, but cannot. Nevertheleſs, how happy is ſuch a Soul and near to Devotion! When we ſeek God we are on the Eve of finding him. This is that Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs to which the Lord promiſes a Refreſhment. Theſe Deſires are the effects of Grace: but if Nature doth nothing in vain, with much ſtronger Reaſon does Grace. Theſe Deſires therefore cannot be fruitleſs, they will obtain their end, they will be filled one day. There's hardly any thing but wherein the vigour of the Soul, and the force of the Deſires, hit their mark: and hereby, rather than by the ſtrength of his Armies, did the Great *Alexander* vanquiſh the World, gain ſo many Battels, take ſo many Cities, and trample on the Necks of conquered Nations: when things neceſſary to the Accompliſhment of his Deſigns fail'd him, the vigour of his Courage, that is, the force of his Deſires, ſerved inſtead of them. If the Deſires can perform ſo much in *things without us*, and independent on our Will, what cannot they do in that which depends thereon, and is vertually our Will it ſelf?

To make theſe pious deſires ſucceed, we are to call God to our aid: theſe are younglings, that he has cauſed to be born, and 'tis his Intereſt to nouriſh them; theſe be the *Aurora* of that Sun, who doth not fail to come and fully enlighten us, provided he be invok'd with fervour. Here is therefore another Adviſo, which is but a Corollary and a Deduction from the former:

We

We muſt aſk of God the grace of Devotion, and in his preſence groan after what we have not. If there be any favour of our Vows and Tears, if there is any Gift that comes immediately from Heaven, 'tis this Virtue; for nothing is more pure and more elevated among the Chriſtian Virtues. *If any of you lack Wiſdom*, ſays St. *James*, *let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.* I know not, whether there be any part of Chriſtian Wiſdom more deſirable than this. Of God we aſk our daily Bread, our Food and Rayment, health of Body, and cure of our Diſeaſes: but the Soul is ſick, poor, and dying, when depriv'd of Devotion, which is its Fire, Soul, Life. In a word, there is nothing to which we may more aſſuredly apply the promiſe of St. *James*, that God refuſeth no body, but gives to all liberally; ſince it is the Prayer of the World, which is moſt agreeable to him, becauſe it tends wholly to his Glory and our own Salvation. We aſk of God, that he would pleaſe to enter into us, and that we may enter into him, to be perfectly united to him by a mutual tye: And how cannot this be well-pleaſing to God, ſeeing our Lord Chriſt himſelf, the model of our thoughts and actions, hath asked the ſame thing for us; That *I may be in them and they in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* Here therefore we ought to begin our Inſtructions, and the Faithful are to begin their Work: for if nothing can be done without God of what doth not regard him, how can we do that without him, which depends immediately upon him, and is terminated in him.

Meditation.

I conſult my own Heart to know whether I can truly ſay, *My Soul fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. As the Hart panteth after the Water Brooks, ſo my Soul thirſteth for the living God. My Soul is as a barren and dry Land, where no Water is: when ſhall I come and appear before God?*

God? But alas, I find not in me theſe thoughts and motions. I find there a great barrenneſs, and (as it were) a general privation of Heavenly Graces: I meet only with ſome languiſhing deſires, that periſh in the moment of their birth. My Faith is wavering, my Charity cold, my Hope weak, my Zeal almoſt extinct, and my Devotion luke-warm. Awaken thy ſelf immediately, O my Soul; if thou wouldſt be united to thy God, if thou would'ſt love him and be beloved by him; if thou wouldſt have him kindle the pure Flames of Devotion in thy Soul, thou muſt will it, deſire it, ask it. This Good, this great Good, deſerves that thou ſhouldſt make the firſt ſteps, and get before it. Do not ſay unto me, that thou art ſhackled up in unhappy Chains, and the Fleſh calls and perſwades thee to the contrary, that thou wouldſt but thou canſt not be Pious; that thou wouldſt this moment but thou canſt not will it any time long. Alas! if thou willeſt it, O my Soul, it may be done: theſe Chains of thy will are voluntary Chains: theſe bonds are evil Habits and ingagements in Corruption, which are ſo far from leſſening thy Sin, that they render thee the more culpable. In this ſort of things, we do all that we will, and when we do not that which we will, 'tis becauſe we will it with a moſt imperfect will.

Prayer.

O *Moſt merciful Saviour, I am very ſenſible, I am not truly Devout, becauſe I have not the will to be ſo: but alas! though the Cords that tye up my will to work evil, be voluntary, yet they are not the leſs ſtrong nor the leſs eaſie to be diſſolved. My corruption is in my Will, and therefore I cannot conquer it by my will alone. Thy Grace is ſufficient for me; but without it I can do nothing. Come then, come my Deliverer, and break theſe Chains under which I groan; I will not let thee go till thou haſt bleſſed me: Create in me a pure Heart, and renew a right Spirit within me: Let thy free Spirit ſuſtain me. It would be in vain to ſeek counſel*

and

and aid to promote and succour my Devotion: Without thee, Designs fail of their success, and councils are unprofitable. We can scarce guard Cities or build Houses, unless thou watchest, unless thou put to thine hand, all our cares and labour becomes vain. Hear my Prayers, O God, and let not my Meditations be fruitless. Quicken the Divine word of thy holy Spirit, that it may enkindle my heart as a Fire, and that I may be forthwith delivered from those coldnesses which rack and torture me, so as I may be filled with Devotion as much as I can wish to be so.

CHAP. II.

The second general Advice: To lead an holy Life, and practice all the Vertues.

WE have already said somewhat of the necessity of living well, to become truly devout; but the Subject is too important to make a halt or stop there. And therefore let us now consider, that there is no Union more streight than that of a faithful Soul with its God in the acts of Devotion; 'tis a secret commerce; 'tis to see God face to face, and speak with him as one intimate Friend speaks with another. All that is conceiv'd of the Union betwixt the Husband and the Wife, between the Father and the Son, betwixt the Body and a Member, is not strong enough to represent to us the Union of a Soul that flies to Heaven upon the Wings of Hope and Faith, and to which God discovers the inestimable treasures of his Love. God enters into it and it into God, and so they become one. But who doth not see, that to smooth the way to himself towards so strict an union, he must be Pure even as he is Pure? the heavenly Lamp suffers no covering, nor mixture of Day or Night. God who is Light cannot be united to a Soul that is in Darkness.

If

If there be any Vertue, for which we are owing to the Holy Ghoſt's preſence in us, it is Devotion. Now we know well enough, by what we may obtain this preſence of the H. Spirit. 'Tis not by the magnificence of the houſe, but its neatneſs: when the evil Spirit goeth out of the houſe and at his return findeth it ſwept and garniſhed, he returns aſham'd, and cannot enter thereinto without the help of ſix other Spirits more wicked than himſelf. That which drives the evil Spirit away, attracts the holy one? and he does not make our heart to be his Temple, unleſs we baniſh thence all Impurity. *Moſes* carves and poliſhes two Tables of Stone, God engraves his Law thereon. A Painter cleanſes his linnen-cloth before he draws on it the Picture of a Prince. We have two carnal tables of the Heart, the Underſtanding and Will: but we are not to hope, that God will write his Laws, or the H. Ghoſt paint his Image thereon, unleſs they be neat and poliſhed. Thou devout and pious Soul, which wiſheſt to ſee God abiding in thee, and his love in thy heart, cleanſe the table of thy Underſtanding from thoſe many Errours, Prejudices, fond Imaginations and evil thoughts, cleanſe the table of thy Will from thoſe ſinful Inclinations and vicious Habits. When both theſe tables ſhall become blank and white, undoubtedly God will come to paint and engrave his Image thereon.

Devotion is an entrance into Gods Cabinet; *He brought me*, ſays the Spouſe, *to the Banquetting-houſe*, but no one enters there unleſs he have the Wedding-Garment on, and be gracefully deck'd with Faith, Hope, and Charity; unleſs he put on the Lord *Jeſus* Chriſt, and the Bowels of Mercy, of a meek Mind, of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs. Devotion is an Elevation of the Soul, and Sin a Clog to it: If we burthen the Soul with theſe Weights, how ſhall it liſt it ſelf up? We are therefore to diſcharge our Heart of one Sin to day, to morrow of another, to ſubdue Covetouſneſs one

one day to attack Pride, another Ambition; and the more thy Heart is thus engag'd, the more free will thy Devotion be. Above all, we ought to remember that our Heart is the most delicate and tender part of us; there's no need of putting it into Disorder: We overthrow it with Age; but to re-establish it is the utmost Difficulty. It is the eye of the Soul; any chip, any grain of Dust is able to destroy it. It is Milk, which is corrupted by the Air's Motion only, and by Thunder; 'tis a Lute that is put out of Tune by unseasonable Distempers of the Air: and certainly, true Sanctification has more parts than a Lute hath strings; so that this holiness of the Heart is ruined by the disorder of one of those parts, as one bad Sound destroys all the Harmony of a Consort: and therefore, with a wonderful Care we ought to guard our Heart and every part thereof. The Soul resembles a Sea, and it's Passions the Winds: If you do not bridle and keep in these Passions, they will raise terrible Tempests in the Sea; and Devotion, which is a peaceable Vertue, will scarce be heard. Every Passion carries the Heart to it self, and Devotion, being a Stranger, and standing only by it self, will never gain it.

There is, most assuredly, a very near Relation betwixt Words and Actions; they come from the same Source, and the same Heart produces them: wherefore, I think, we cannot better employ the Mouth than to sing the Praises of God; nor the Mind, than to contemplate his Wonders; nor the Soul, than to lift it self up by Piety and the practise of good Works. We have said, that a Man is ill disposed in coming from a Ball or Comedy, to fall to pious Ordinances. On the quite contrary, I say, that in returning from the House of Mourning, where he has comforted the Afflicted, succour'd the Miserable, sustained the Weak, fed the Poor, and defended the Oppress'd, he finds himself in such a Gayety of Heart, and such a Disposition

ſition to Prayer, as is inconceivable. He comes to God with the Lightneſs and Alacrity of a Servant, who preſents himſelf before his Maſter, after having done his Duty, to obtain the Reward: for, although he acknowledges he deſerves nothing at God's hands, yet he knows, that God liberally recompenſeth us for what we do only by the help of his Grace. He approaches to the Altar with the Confidence of a Subject, that appears before his Prince with Preſents, which he knows are capable of opening the way to his Heart: for, though our good Works be moſt imperfect Gifts, that hold not what they have good in them but from God's Liberality, nevertheleſs, he is not ignorant, that he accepts them as if they were of great Price. Inſomuch, as I will not make any difficulty to ſay, that the *Ancients* and *Moderns*, who have diſtinguiſh'd the *Active* Life of a *Chriſtian* from the *Contemplative*, and have believed, that this can be without that, and even that the Contemplative Life was far more excellent than the other, are aſſuredly in a great errour: for, by ſeperating the Active life, which conſiſts in doing good to our Neighbour, and practiſing Charity to the afflicted and miſerable, from the contemplative life, to which they believed they could give themſelves up entirely, they have certainly depriv'd Devotion of a very great help. I have already confeſs'd there to be no need, that the Imployments of *Martha*, which have regard to the bodily Service of our Saviour and his Members, ſhould take away from us the time conſecrated to *Mary's* works, to reading Meditation and Prayer. But we have time enough for all: When *Mary* ſhall have been ſufficiently heard, then its fit ſhe take the place of *Martha*. Wherefore I would not counſel him that wou'd attain to perfect Devotion, to renounce that part of the World which conſiſts of the afflicted Members of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. This is the School of Virtue and Piety; and ſo

ſo far is it, that this practiſe of works of Mercy can diſtract devout Souls, that it is the readieſt and ſureſt way to arrive at Devotion. The *Ideas* of the World I confeſs are incompatible with thoſe wherewith a devout Soul ought to be fill'd: A tragical event, the ſight of a triumph, the hope of a fortune for one's ſelf, the grandeur of that of another, a duel, a warr, all *this* (I ſay) hath no alliance with the ſweet *Images* of God, of his Love and Benefits. Wherefore it's good to ſhut and bar the Door againſt theſe firſt Repreſentations, if we would with ſucceſs labour to eſtabliſh others in their room: but the Images of a man languiſhing upon the Bed of Sickneſs, or another, that ſuffers for God's ſake agrees eaſily with the thought of our Lord Chriſt ſuffering for us. A multitude of poor Creatures, to whom thou openeſt thy Bowels, will eaſily lead thee to the Conſideration of thoſe Liberalities, thou receiveſt from God. The aid thou ſhalt lend one to defend his Life, another for the defence of his Honour and Reputation, will oblige thee to think on the Benefits and Helps, thou continually receiveſt from Heaven. Thou ſhalt have no manner of need to baniſh the thoughts that attend an *Active* life; lodge thoſe in their place, which ſpring from Contemplation: They will be united in the ſame heart, and lend one another mutual Succour.

Meditation.

I HAVE been told ſometimes that the Vertues are Siſters, that walk hand in hand, that they are ſo many Rings in an holy chain, which is broken by the rupture of one of thoſe Rings. They can't be without one another; and therefore, O my Soul thou canſt not be truly devout, becauſe thou art not truly Vertuous, and thou haſt not in thy heart the Practice of all good works. Doſt not thou ſee, that the World is exactly fram'd to furniſh employ to thy Vertues, and to ſollicit

thee to good and holy actions? the heavens declare the Glory of God, and the extent of the Firmament sheweth his Almighty Power; that thou mayest joyn thy Voice to those praises which all Nature sings, and thy gratitude may have scope to act upon. The Air forms outragious Tempests, makes the Thunder and Lightning to break forth; so as the fear of God may spring up in thee, and thou mayest tremble under his hands which make the Mountains to tremble. Dost not thou see that God here below makes miserable wretches, that they may be the Objects of thy Compassion; poor ones, that thou mayest be liberal; afflicted, that thou mayest comfort them; weak for thee to uphold; sick, that thou mayest visit them? Doth not he permit too even that there be sinners, straying like lost Sheep, that thou mayst bring them into the right way; ignorant ones, for thee to instruct; imprudent, that thou mayest be their Director; some that fall, that thou mayest help them up again, and for thy self that thou look to thy steps; and even wicked persons, who perish, that thou mayest be put into a wholesom terrour for thy self? does not he suffer examples of Vanity to be, that thou mayest slight and contemn the World; sudden and unlookt for deaths, that thou should'st watch and be ever upon thy Guard; proud men, that fall into ruine, while thou retaineſt thy self in Humility; the wicked, who are punisht for thee to dread sin; good men, that are rewarded, for thee to seek Vertue? yet amidst so many lessons thou art deaf and immoveable. Thou makest thy Vertue to consist in not doing evil, *that is to say*, in doing nothing; as if any one should make life to consist in death, and in being depriv'd of Motion. Thou remembrest not that the barren fig-tree was cut up by the root; that God will cast out the unprofitable servant, and will banish out of his Paradice both him that hath lost his talent, and him that had only buried it in the Earth.

Prayer

Prayer.

COme then, O my Divine Redeemer, come and cultivate my heart, that it be no more a rocky and barren ground. Soften this Rock by the rain of thy Grace; bleſs this Field to make it bring forth Fruits worthy of Repentance. Let mine hands diſtill Myrrh, and my fingers precious Spices: Let them be alwayes opened to the miſerable: Let my feet run to the help of the afflicted: Let my ears receive, with earneſtneſs, thy Word and thy Praiſes: Let my tongue continually celebrate thy moſt glorious Name, and lift up, even to Heaven, the Acts of thy good Favour. O Holy Spirit, thou Principle of all good motions, inſtill Life into me; be thou the Soul of my Soul, that it may be no more interred in the Grave of Sleep and Sin, but that it may act mightily, that it be inflamed by the fire of Charity; that this Fire may never ceaſe one moment to be at reſt and without Action; ſo that by continual practice of good Works I may be diſpoſed to Devotion, and to an Union with thee, who art the Object of my Love. O let me by this Purity invite Him more and more, who is the Author of every good and perfect Gift, to make me partake of the flames of Zeal and Piety.

CHAP. III.

The third general Direction; To be watchful over the Senses, and not let the Heart loose.

SO near a commerce is there between the Heart and the Senses, that our strife would be in vain to guard the one, unless we set a strict watch over the other. The Heart is the House; the Senses are the Gates and Windows. And hereat does the Devil enter and seises on our Souls. This Enemy prepares so many batteries without as we have external Senses, and if we escape Death on one side, he sends it us on the other. Notwithstanding, this we may say in vindication of the Senses, that they are more unhapy than criminal: they have a sensation of what they ought to have according to the order of Creation: and even the greatest part of *Ideas*, which come to 'em, are innocent, but they are spoyled in arriving at the Heart. The beauty of a Woman, the glitter of Gold and Silver and precious Stones, the sweetness of vocal Musick are the works of God, and consequently they cannot be evil: but 'tis the Heart poysons these innocent Images. Nevertheless, since the Heart doth not scatter it's poyson but upon the Objects which are presented to it, we should take away the matter of its Crimes, and it's mischievous *Habits* would be assuredly destroy'd and lost, if they wanted Employment; and therefore it's of absolute necessity to have a constant guard over the Senses. *I made an agreement with mine Eyes*, says an holy man, *not to look upon all Women.* This has been ever the custom of those who would become truly devout, to hold their Souls shut up to the multitude of Objects that might assault 'em on all sides. True it is, the usage of this Maxime has bin pusht on and wrested even to *Superstition*: some have voluntarily banisht themselves into Desarts, that they might see nothing at all: Others have lock'd themselves

themſelves up in Cells and Caves never to come forth. And Hiſtory tells us of an *Egyptian* Hermit, who would never agree to let his Siſter have the Pleaſure of ſeeing of him. He receiv'd Order from his Superiour, at the intreaty of *Athanaſius* to go and viſit her: he went, but he preſented himſelf before her with his Eyes ſhut, and would by no means ſee her: *Glut thy ſelf quickly* (ſayd he to her) *with the ſight of me.* Theſe exceſſes do a greater wrong and injury to Reaſon, than they bring help to Devotion. The Soul draws a vaſt aid from its ſenſes, when it knows how to make a good uſe of them. To ſtop all the Avenues, whereby Knowledge may arrive to the Soul, is to keep it in a darkſome and lonely Priſon, and nouriſh it in Ignorance. What is true herein is, that 'tis dangerous for it to be concern'd about evil Objects; becauſe it carries thence a tincture which indiſpoſes it for Devotion. 'Tis no leſs dangerous to permit it to meddle too much with indifferent Objects, ſince this diſſipates its ſtrength, and evermore it returns with ſomewhat of the Vain air of thoſe Courſes, it takes Abroad.

This is the way of the Worlds living: we give, we receive Viſits; we expoſe our ſelves to converſation, *that is*, to the contagion of every Comer. The eyes are always open'd to ſee new Objects; the Ears to hear News: Vain is our Diſcourſe; we ſay there a thouſand impertinences and more of evil than good things. One willl entertain you with a Dreſs; Another with a little intrigue of the Town: Others will pour profane or back-biting diſcourſes into your Breaſt. One will carry you to ſee a new Houſe, or any fine building: One lately come from a new World will tell you ſtrange things, and enlarge his Recitals with Stories and Miracles, which he himſelf had been concern'd in: and your Soul will return to your Houſe charged with theſe Toys and Gew-gaws. When it would enter into its Cloſet, it's certain, it will not find

the Heart in its ordinary Diſpoſitions: and upon that account it is the more difficult to be Devout in great Cities, where you can ſcarcely defend your ſelves from theſe Amuſements; ſo that I would advice the faithful Soul to keep its ſelf up cloſe. The Souls of worldly people are like to your great Streets, they are open to every Comer; we are never there but in a crowd: and Devotion, which loves Privacy, is not pleaſed with theſe publick places. Theſe are Inns where all Strangers are lodg'd well, and the Maſter lyes oft out of Doors: But the heart of the faithful Perſon ought to be for himſelf, and God who is its Maſter, is to be ever at Large. *A Garden incloſed is my Siſter, my Spouſe; a Spring ſhut up, a Fountain ſealed*, ſays Jeſus Chriſt to his Spouſe, that is, to every Chriſtian Soul. Lock up this Garden, if thou wouldſt preſerve the Flowers and Fruits, and let not the purity of thy living Waters be corrupted by unclean Beaſts. Temples and Oratories are not to be acceſſible to the prophane: our Hearts are the Temples of the holy Ghoſt; and therefore let us ſhut the Gates againſt a thouſand indiſcreet Ideas and vain Objects, that would prophane them. The Soul is a veſſel which Grace fills with ſweet Odours; but we ſhould not give it too much Air, otherwiſe it would evaporate and become inſipid. If the veſſel be full it can receive nothing new without loſing what it had before. If it be filled with Devotion, and we bring it into the World, according to the meaſure it is filled with Vanities, theſe Vanities will ſend what it had good a packing away. 'Tis a truth we are to fix in our memories, that at all times we make any ſally into the World, we loſe ſo much of our own. *Dinah* went out to ſee the Daughters of the Land, and ſhe loſt her beſt ornament, the flower of her Virginity. But eſpecially let us remember, that in ſeeking out harmleſs Objects, we do not meet with ſinful ones: every where the Devil is in ambuſh, he has made Nets of the very Roſes. Sin

reigns

reigns in all places; ſo that if we ſlip aſide but a little, we moſt certainly meet with it; and then we ſhall find it a very difficult matter to avoid Infection.

But what ſhall we ſay of thoſe, that with a ſet deſign go into places, where they are ſure Sin domineers, and Vice triumphs? After having loſt half of their time in preparing themſelves for a Ball, they will give the other part to the Devil, and plunge themſelves into criminal Pleaſures. Theſe people are deliberate murtherers of themſelves in Ambuſh, and God will moſt juſtly demand of them an account of their Souls. Of all this, I conclude that the Devout Perſon ought to be very reſerved as to the World, that he is not to be ſeen but by very few, and to ſee much fewer, and that he ought to get rid of that vain curioſity to know what paſſes therein. 'Tis enough for him to know what paſſes in his own heart, and well to regulate all its motions: Of what Importance to him is it to learn what is become of ſuch a Fleet, what ſucceſs had ſuch a Battel, how proſpered ſuch a Negotiation, how goe the treaties on of Peace, or the preparatives for War? The knowledge of all this cannot make him happy: theſe are only *Ideas*, which are heapt in the memory, and thence do not fail to make an irruption upon his Heart amidſt his pious Duties.

Meditation.

HOW happy wilt thou be, O my Soul, when thou ſhalt be in that place, where thou ſhalt have nothing to fear, where thou ſhalt be able to ſoar aloft, and fly ſucceſſively on an infinite number of Objects, and abandon thy ſelf intirely to contemplation and diverſity of thoughts! This Happineſs will arrive to thee, when thou ſhalt be in Heaven. All Objects there will tell thee of thy Duty, and ſollicit thee to Obedience. Thou ſhalt be no more afraid, leaſt *Snakes* lye under the Flowers, or the Devil be in Ambuſh in thoſe places whither thy Mind and ſteps ſhall carry thee. Thy mind

being become vaſt will fear no Diſſipation; it will embrace all Objects without fear of being overwhelmed: and for the being fill'd with an infinite number of the moſt different *Ideas*, thy God will not have the leſs room in thee, ſince all thoſe *Ideas* will be hallowed and belov'd by God. But now here there's nothing of the like; thou canſt not take one Step without running into danger; thou canſt not go out from thy ſelf without meeting an Enemy that ſeeks thee and has ſworn thy Ruine; thou canſt not admit into thy Boſom all thoſe Objects which in a Crowd come to thy Senſes, but thou filleſt thy Heart therewith, and robbeſt God of the place he ought alone to poſſeſs. Make not therefore ſo many Sallies into the Univerſe where thou wilt always leave off thy own: contain thy ſelf within the Bounds of thine own Heart; if it be not ſo large, it is very deep, and thou wilt find ample matter enough wherewith to exerciſe thy ſelf. Thou wilt never be able to ſound it to the Bottom; it cannot be known but by him that tryeth the Reins and Thoughts; but at leaſt pierce into that impenetrable Subject as far as thou canſt. Examine thy ſelf, and this Knowledge of what paſſes in thee will be worth more than the Knowledge of all that is done in the World, and paſſeth amongſt men: Mingle not thy ſelf with Wars or Diſentanglings of Eſtates, and ſuch Particulars. Take notice of thoſe Combats betwixt thy Fleſh and thy Spirit, between the Law of thy Members and that of thy Underſtanding. Pacifie theſe differences; teach the Fleſh to be obedient; place Reaſon again in it's Throne; give it Piety for a Counſellor; tame the Paſſions and make them Slaves. Put thy little Eſtate into a good order, and both wiſely and holily govern that great People which is ſhut up in ſo little a Country, that is to ſay, that multitude of Affections, Thoughts, Sentiments, and Paſſions, which are in thy Heart.

Prayer

Prayer.

O God, the great Governour of the World, who not only holdeſt the Reins of the Waters and Sea leſt it overflow the dry Land, but brid'leſt the Wickedneſs of Men leſt that overflow the World; who by thy profound Wiſdom ruleſt the World after ſuch a manner as thou draweſt Light out of Darkneſs; Preſide over the motions of my Heart, Draw Light out of this Chaos and Darkneſs, take the Reins to conduct my Soul, permit it not to wander about, and loſe it ſelf in it's Rambles; ſtop the Inclination and Turbulencies of its Paſſions, that it may be recollected wholly into its ſelf; and labouring about its own proper Affairs, may take care to prepare a Room for thee, to retain thee, to poſſeſs thee only, to contemplate nothing but thee, and baniſh thence all other Ideas; *ſo as by this means it may be diſpoſed to Devotion.*

CHAP. IV.

The fourth general Direction; To perſevere in holy Duties, and not to ſtartle at any Difficulties.

WE have not repreſented Devotion as an eaſie thing to obtain, and therefore the Faithful need not be ſurpriz'd to meet with difficulties therein; much leſs are they to withdraw and deſpond: 'tis a new Advice I gave here to obtain it. Every upright Soul has frequently made experience, that in being willing to lift it ſelf up it has found the Wings of its Devotion clogged either by worldly Vanities or the ſluggiſhneſs of the Fleſh: in this Eſtate, if it relax, it is undone. Theſe Deſires, ſo neceſſary (as we have ſeen) muſt have Action and Courage joyn'd to them. *Solomon* ſpeaks in his Proverbs of the Motion of an idle Man, whoſe whole Strength was exhauſted in deſires: He always makes the beſt Reſolutions in the World, but

never ſtirs out of his place. This lazineſs of the Soul perhaps might be what *Solomon* refers ſo much to; for he hath hardly a Chapter, but [as he paſſes along] he has a hit at the Sluggard. This ſluggiſhneſs of the Soul is the Vice of thoſe who drain themſelves dry in praiſing Vertue, and reſerve no ſtrength to run after and attain it. The falſly devout one does the ſame thing; he praiſes, he deſires it, but he yields to the firſt Temptation his Devotion meets withal. But doſt not thou know, that all *Great* things are difficult? Doth a Pilot abandon his Veſſel at the firſt rough Blaſt of Wind? Doth not a Rower, that goes againſt the Stream of a rapid River, ſtruggle ſtiffly to reſiſt the Water? He holds on, tugs, wipes his Fore-head, takes Courage, and at laſt he overcomes. Does a Merchant renounce all Traffick for one loſs; or a Courtier all his hopes for one ill turn of Fortune? Every one ſtrives to regain by Diligence what his Diſgrace had taken away from him. We muſt alſo reſolvedly bend our ſelves againſt Indevotion; and when we perceive our Heart ill diſpos'd, its motions languiſhing, and its Devotions travers'd by Wand'rings, we are to quell and take our Heart lower till we have brought it to its Duty; we are to read, meditate, pray, let it be never ſo much againſt the Grain. "Although "the Devil comes to fill your Mind with evil thoughts, "(ſays St. *Baſil*) you ought not therefore to abandon "the uſe of Prayer; you are to make new and greater Endeavours. You muſt pray to God he would "be pleas'd to break this thick Wall of vain thoughts "which ſeparates you from him: you muſt beſeech "him, that your Soul may be able ſoon to get to him "without being retarded by meeting vain and evil "Objects. And if the Enemy ſhould come even with "a plentiful ſupply of Diſtractions, yet you are not to "give back, nor loſe any Courage, nor renounce Victory in the midſt of the Combate. You muſt per-

"ſevere,

"ſevere, till God, perceiving your Conſtancy, come "to fill you with the light of his Spirit, put the Ene- "my to flight, purifie your Underſtanding, and fur- "niſh your Reaſon with a divine Light, whereby your "Soul, being put into the Poſſeſſion of a Tranquillity "exempt from Troubles, may ſerve God with a per- "fect Joy. This holy Perſon inſinuates a Reaſon to us, which we ought to remember in the deſign of *Perſe-verance*; which is, That the Devil never leaves off tempting us; therefore we are not to leave off reſiſt-ing him: our reſiſtance doth not make him give back, ſo that we muſt not be foiled by his Temptations. God, who is the Spectator of our Warfare, and the Rewarder of our Labours, will with Pleaſure ſee the faithful Soul in conflict with it's Infirmities and Diſtra-ctions, and when it is well nigh being ſubdued, will come at length and lend it his helping hand.

Perſeverance is a vertue of ſuch great uſe, that we owe to it the beſt works of *Nature*, of *Art*, and of *Grace*. If God had left the World imperfect, inſtead of a Miracle, he had made a Prodigy. There are particularly certain works, to which the *laſt-hand* is ſo eſſential, that if we do not conclude them, what had been begun, doth intirely periſh. If you leave a Picture after its firſt rough-drawing and deſign, theſe beginnings will not ceaſe ſubſiſting upon the cloath: but if you carry a wheel half way upon an hill, and then leave it to it ſelf for a moment; why, preſently it will get to the Valley's bottom again, and your la-bour will not only be imperfect, but will come juſt to nothing. Devotion is of this laſt ſort of things: if you leave it half done, what you had done, will ſoon periſh. 'Tis *Penelope*'s web; what is done by day, is undone by night. If thy life be not a perpetual day, and if thou doſt not inceſſantly toil to advance thy Pie-ty by Practice, one night only form'd by the darkneſs of Indevotion and the abſence of Gods Grace, will ruine

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the work of many yeats, and one minute of lazineſs will deſtroy that which Courage, upheld a long time, had produced. Thy Devotion, *O Chriſtian* Soul, is no more than a ſpark. Nouriſh this ſacred fire precioufly, blow it without remiſſion, gather combuſtible matter to it from all ſides; make thee a treaſure of good things, turn oft towards *Jeſus* Chriſt, thy Sun and thy Star, and this ſmall ſparkle will become a great fire, and this fire will cauſe a kindling, and that kindling will caſt up flames, and thoſe flames will lift thee to Heaven: But if thou neglect this ſpark, it will go quite out. *Sampſon* delivers himſelf up into the arms of *Dalilah*, he ſleeps in her breaſt, his hair is ſhav'd, which is the ſeat of his ſtrength, and when he awakes he goes according to cuſtom to take away the gates of *Gath*, and break the cords of the *Philiſtines*, but he doth not find himſelf the ſame *Sampſon*. So the *Chriſtian* that is weakned by a non-aſſiduity to Devotion, ſleeps in the arms of Pleaſure; his Soul is enervated: he thinks to return to his old wont of having commere with God, but the Devil attacks and overthrows him by a load of evil thoughts, under which his Devotion lyes bound as by ſo many Chains.

If the *Heavens* ſhould ſtop only for a day, perhaps there would follow a general ſlaughter and ſubverſion of Nature; and much more without doubt the inferior things would receive a conſiderable damage. When the ſuperior part of our Soul ſtops its divine motions, we cannot queſtion but that a great diſorder ariſes in the lower part: for the paſſions which would ever be the maſters, do manage wiſely theſe moments of Relaxation to prepare a Revolt. So that our Piety and Devotion muſt have the conſtancy, ſwiftneſs and order of the heavenly motions, ſo as this *little World* may be always in a good Eſtate. Nothing ſhould hinder or interrupt the courſe of Devotion. You ſee *Daniel*, all the terrours of Death could not ſtop him in his divine

vine race. He must be cast into the den of Lions; if he invokes God; yet this hinders him not from falling down at his set hours towards *Jerusalem*, the holy City Above all, let us be far from the way of the World, that runs to its own affairs, as if they were the most pressing. Let us give to God preferably, what belongs to him: and let us be at no farther trouble for the rest. 'Tis said of the *Serpent*, that he secures his head, when he is pursued, and exposes his body, if he can't save it. The hours consecrated to Devotion are the head of our life, and 'tis an holy *prudence* not to expose them but to draw them out of Danger, least the Devil and the World devour them.

In short, persevering is far better than violent Devotion, 'tis much better to go a little pace, but to be going always, that to run impetuous, yet interrupted races. Some are devout only by fits: for a day, nothing more ardent, more humble, more mov'd; but on the morrow so well dryed up in the torrent of their Tears, that you can't see so much as the tracks of 'em. The ardency of this fever is so extremely well quench'd as the least heat is not to be found. A constant mediocrity is preferable before these Excesses of a small Duration. Not that I think it not very necessary, that Devotion have its Festivals, and labour extraordinarily to rewaken it self on certain dayes and times. These are the Extraordinaries of Piety, to which we are to return as frequently as we can, and mainly never to want it at times destin'd to pious Uses and Works; as the participation of the blessed Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood: But beside these Extraordinaries, I would have the Soul have it's ordinary course well regulated; and if that cannot be done always with those great motions, as it were to be wisht, yet that it never fall in the least in the Respites and Intermissions.

Medi-

Meditation.

HAve not I great reaſon to faint, and deſpair of ſucceſs in all my deſigns, if I do but conſider the greatneſs of the Undertakings, the difficulties to be met withal therein, and the meanneſs of my own Strength; or, to ſpeak better, my Weakneſs, and my Nothing. I aim at great things, for I aim at becoming one with my God. I would become like him; I would renew his Image in me; I would cleanſe my Heart, ſo corrupt with Sin; I would rebuild this great Houſe which Sin and the Devil have brought to ruin; I would aſcend the Throne; I wou'd become King and Prieſt to God my Father. Alas! my Soul, where in thy ſelf wilt thou find ſtrength to do ſuch great things, thou, who art only Darkneſs, Weakneſs, and Pollution? If thou had'ſt no other Enemy to engage with but the Devil, how wilt thou vanquiſh that red Dragon which hath ſeven Heads and ten Horns? That wicked Serpent at the beginning poyſoned our firſt Parents with the breath of his Mouth. And now he infects all the Sources where we drink; he lays his Snares in all our Paths; and more eſpecially, he never makes greater Endeavours to deſtroy us than when we make ours to unite us to God by Prayer and Devotion: then he ſtirs up all the Fantomes of our Imagination to carry us out from God's Preſence: He raiſes the Waves of our Paſſions and Concupiſcence to keep us from that ſafe Harbour. And truly, 'tis his Intereſt to do thus; for thou never fighteſt him, O my Soul, with more Succeſs, than by Prayer, when fervent and devout: ſo that he mingles Heaven and Earth together to diſtract thee, and inſtill into thee Sentiments of Coldneſs. Do not flatter thy ſelf: if thou doſt not ſee the Enemy with thy fleſhly Eyes, yet he ſhoots his fiery Darts at thee: he ſpeaks with thee, he attacks thee, he tempts thee by the mouth of thy Luſt, which never fails him, and has

has made a League with him. But ſtill, O my Soul! loſe no Courage: if thou canſt do nothing of thy ſelf, thou canſt do all things through thy Saviour, who ſtrengthens thee. Watch, be ſober, perſevere, lay this evil Spirit, and drive him far from thee: *Reſiſt the Devil and he will flee from you.* He preſſes upon none but thoſe that give back.

Prayer.

AND thou, O Lord Jeſus, my Redeemer, the great Spirit of Light, oppoſe thy ſelf for me to this Spirit of Darkneſs. Let the Lion of the Tribe of Juda break the Jaw-bones of that roaring Lion that turns upon me to devour me. Let the holy Seed of the Woman break this Serpent's head; give me Antidotes againſt his Poyſon. Let thy Grace heal the Wounds which his Bitings and Stings have made in my Soul. Uphold me in all the Difficulties which that dangerous Enemy makes me meet with in my Spiritual Exerciſes. When I enter into my Cloſet or thy Temple, be like a brazen Wall about me to defend me from the Acceſs of Evil Spirits. So as under the Wings of thy Protection and Love, I may live, during theſe Moments, in a clear and calm Air, in a profound Peace; by favour whereof, I may conſecrate to thee all my Thoughts, my Will, my Heart, my Underſtanding, and my Imagination, and nothing may withdraw me from thee.

CHAP. V.

The fifth general Direction to help Devotion: To have God always before our Eyes.

THis is a Remedy for moſt Miſchiefs, but 'tis particularly ſo againſt Indevotion. I ſhall ſay by and by, that the Faithful ought to have their hours of Devotion wherein to retrace expreſly the *Idea*'s of the Divinity in their Mind, and awaken it to remember his Benefits and Gra-

Graces: But this is not what I mean at preſent; I ſpeak of that continual, and (as it were) habitual Thought of God, which is never to be abandoned. 'Tis a delicate and moſt ſpiritual Meditation, which comes a croſs to rob our worldly Affairs of thoſe Moments which it conſecrates to Heaven: 'Tis a ſublime Operation of an Underſtanding illuminated by the light of Grace, that finds God *all in all*, that mixeth him in all our Actions, and ſpieth him out in all Objects. 'Tis an act of the Soul, whereby, amid humane Affairs, it turns without Violence to God-ward, thorough an Habit it has acquir'd. It makes all things to be as ſo many Ladders to ſcale Heaven, and all Objects to put one in mind of God. An Artificer while he is working, a Traveller in his Journey, a Scholar in his Study, will find means to ſanctifie what each does, in cauſing God to intervene by pious Reflections. Let the Lamb follow thee, O faithful Soul, whitherſoever thou goeſt, that thou may'ſt be able one day to follow him whither he ſhall go. If thou art lying down in thy Bed, think on the Tomb of thy Saviour, who, for thy Salvation, was pleaſed to enter into the Chambers of Death. Art thou near falling on ſleep, think on Chriſt, whoſe eyes were ſhut by the ſleep of Death. An Infant juſt born will recall to thee the thought of thy Lord's Abaſement and Humility in his Birth. An unhappy Perſon that ſuffers for his ſins, will bring thee to think on *Jeſus*, who ſuffered for thine. One that asks an Alms, will ask it for Chriſt his ſake, or will tell thee, that he became poor, that thou might'ſt be rich. In a word out of all things 'tis eaſie for thee to extract an Occaſion to think on thy God. What ſhall I ſay of the Objects of Nature, that put thee in mind of him almoſt againſt thy Will? If thou riſeſt betimes, thou canſt not ſee the Sun riſing, without thinking on him, that has made this work, and without being reminded of the Sun of thy Soul, who pours forth

forth the gleams of his Grace into thy Heart, to diſperſe thence all Darkneſs. The Woods, the Rivers, the Mountains, the Feilds cover'd with harveſt Corn, the Trees, Fruits, Flowers, all in ſhort will entertain and complement thee with thy God: *For the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy Work.* The Flyes and Worms themſelves ſpeak this, ſince we ſee the Divinity ſhowing in them: For as St *Auſtin* ſays well, *this worker in ſuch a manner appears great in great things, that he does not appear leſs great in the leaſt of his works.*

We are therefore to form an Habit to our ſelves of thinking on God, even while we do every thing, and this will be the true way of doing well, what we do, and engaging God to do it with us. Now there are ſome Employments, which take not the Soul intirely up. A workman at his work, or a woman in ſuch concerns as are ordinary to that Sex, will roul about in their Imagination a thouſand *Chimerical* deſigns, wander up and down every where, and think of an hundred things ſucceſſively: But what is it, reſtrains 'em from giving up to God that part of their Soul and Attention, which they deduct from their other work? why will they not think of their Redeemer, of the Obligations they have to him, and the Acknowledgement and Recollection, which they rather owe to him than to a vain chat and converſation, they have had ſome where or other, or ſome adventure, the recital of which had diverted them. "We are carefully to "guard out heart, ſays a father of the Church, and "never to let the thought of God to abandon it, for "fear the memory of God's wonderfull doings ſhould "be ſtifled under the croud of vain thoughts. We "ought to do it in ſuch ſort, that by a continual re-"membrance the thought of the Deity be fixt in us "like the indelible impreſſion of a Seal and Wax.

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This is not ſo impoſſible as ſome at firſt ſight may imagine it; for a Soul truly devout thinks on God not only without any trouble, but frequently without perceiving what lead it to think on him. Thy praiſe, ſays holy *David*, ſhall be continually in my Mouth! Upon which the ſame Author, (whom we have occaſion for almoſt every where) makes this Queſtion: "How can this be done? Can a man in the midſt of "humane Affairs and Converſations have the praiſes "of the Lord in his Mouth? When he ſleeps, when "he drinks, when he eats, and even when he holds "his Peace, can he ſing the Praiſes of God? I anſwer, "ſays he, there is within man an intellectual Mouth, "whereby he receives the Word of Life, which is "his heavenly Bread; nought hinders him from ha-"ving always the praiſes of God in his Mouth: and I "ſay that the thought of God being ingrav'd and "(as it were) ſealed on the upper part of the Soul, may "be call'd a praiſe, that never leaves the Heart.

In ſhort, we cannot conceive how mighty an help to Devotion this is. When we are to ſeek God a far off, the Soul wanders in the way: but if it holds God always near it, it cannot be to ſeek for him. O how eaſie is it to put the Heart into the ſteps of Devotion, and the ways of its Saviour, when it never loſes the ſight of him! If you let a Furnace grow wholly cold, it cannot be heated again without great trouble and coſt; but if you take care to keep up the fire with a little refreſhing, you will conſerve that degree of heat that is neceſſary to it. If our Soul in like manner relents it ſelf, and makes an interruption from thinking on God, we muſt take much pains to kindle the Flames of Devotion afreſh: and therefore we are ever to keep it in Exerciſe.

This continual thinking on God is a moſt acceptable Sacrifice unto him, like to the morning and evening Sacrifice, which was call'd alſo the continual Sacrifice;

crifice; like to that holy *Fire*, which evermore burnt upon the Altar; 'tis like, laſtly, to an eternal Invoca-"tion: for ſo it is, ſays St. *Baſil*, that thou mayſt pray "inceſſantly, not in bringing forth Words of Invoca-"tion, but in doing Works of Imitation: If thy Con-"duct aims only at making thee like and united to "God, thy Life will be a perpetual and a conſtant "Prayer. But let us not doubt, that theſe continual Sacrifices, this Incenſe always ſmoaking, and theſe implicit and indirect Prayers, which come from our Heart in all places and at all times, are the moſt efficacious means to render God acceſſible to us: inſomuch, as every time we would unite our ſelves ſtill more ſtraitly to him by more expreſs Devotions and Prayers, he will forthwith be found near us, and filling us with his Light, will lead us along with him, and honour us with his holy Communications.

Meditation.

MAn is very ſtrangely compos'd; he puts himſelf to much trouble not to do his Duty, and he neglects eaſie things becauſe God commands them. There's nothing ſo eaſie as to think upon God; and nevertheleſs, nothing is ſeldomer done. It ſeems as if 'twere impoſſible not to think on him, ſince all Objects that fall under our Senſes ſpeak to us of the Divinity. Doſt not thou ſee, O my Soul! his Lines, his Characters, his Traces every where? But ſeeſt thou not him in thy own Conſcience, and is he not in the Breaſt of every one of us? 'Tis eaſie then to think on God; yet ſtill it is more ſweet than eaſie. Ah, my Soul! If thou wert as ſpiritual, and as much untied from Matter as thou ſhould'ſt be, thou wouldſt fetch thy Delights and ſovereign Pleaſure from this Meditation. This great God, this good God, is the chief Beauty as well as the only Good. My eyes admire the Light of the Sun, the Regularity of his Motions, the Virtue of his Heat, the juſt and equal Revoluti-

lutions of the heavenly Bodies. We admire the Beauty and Wit in Men, whoſe Force and Elevation appear *Angelical* unto us: but thou art to know, (O my Soul) that theſe Beauties do derive from God, and are only feeble Images of him; that the Sun's Light is mere Darkneſs in compariſon to him; and that the beſt and moſt elevated Souls are earthly and groveling if vied with his Underſtanding. If thou ſaweſt him in his Glory thou wouldſt be raviſh'd into an *Extaſie*, thou would'ſt ſay, *It is good for me to be here; I will build here a Tabernacle.* But alas! thou canſt not ſee him: He is nothing of all thou ſeeſt or haſt the ſenſe of: he is not corporeal Light, nor colour for thy Eyes: he is not a Sound nor Voice for thy Ears: he is no ſavour for thy Palate, nor an Odour for thy Smelling: in ſhort, he is not a *Solid* Body to be touch'd: thou ſeeſt no part of him, yet thou may'ſt find him whole: think on him, and thy Meditation will make thee hold and poſſeſs him. With thy ſpiritual Eyes ſhalt thou ſee an intellectual Light, which puts down all the Beauty of viſible Light: Thou ſhalt hear a divine Harmony that ſurpaſſes all the charms of Muſick: Thou ſhalt taſte ſuch Food, as the Delicacy and Excellency of it is far above all Imagination; and thou wilt ſay, *Come and taſte how good the Lord is.* The Heart is never ſo much pleas'd as when near its Treaſure: Know, O my Soul, that God is thy true Riches and Treaſure: and therefore run after him continually, ſeek him ever, and when thou ſhalt have hold on him, never leave him nor forſake him. Ought a Woman to have a more ſweet and comfortable Thought than that of her Husband when he is abſent? *Thy Maker is thy Husband*; thy God hath eſpouſed thee in his great Compaſſions: Art not thou therefore to aſpire to poſſeſs, and to ſeek his chaſte and divine Embraces? Now thou canſt not obtain this Favour but by fixing thy Spirit upon his divine Eſſence and infinite Perfe-

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ctions by a perpetual Meditation. Get you far away ye vain Objects, that rob me of the Object of my Love, and the sinfull Employments, that hinder me from thinking on my God.

Prayer.

I Seek thee, O my God, be pleased also to seek me, that I may immediately meet with thee. Draw near to me, lay thine hand upon my head, for I am in a trance of Love. Thou putteſt a veil over thy Face; thou hideſt the moſt part from me of the beams of thy Glory: becauſe my eyes are ſtill impure and cannot look upon thee; they are weak, they cannot ſuſtain the Brightneſs and Splendor of thy Light. Thou art hid as to thy Creatures, and letteſt us only have a glimps of thee: But O Lord, purifie my Eyes, that they may be able to view thee apparently: put my heart into thy wayes, that I may ſeek thee and find thee. If thou art hidden and eſtrangeſt thy ſelf from me, I am on the other part a ſtrayed ſheep, ſtrayed from thee. O be pleaſed then to ſeek me: ſhew thy ſelf to me, and hide not the light of thy Countenance from me. Recall me from my wandrings: and let me not be drawn in by the World and the throng of it's vain Objects. Tye my Soul to thee by the cords of thy Love; So as I may not be one Moment without thinking on thee, and when I put up my prayers unto thee, I may ever find thee near me.

CHAP. VI.

The firſt particular Direction: *To have our hours of Devotion well choſen and ordered.*

AFter theſe general Advices, it will be neceſſary to give ſome more particular ones: And firſt, I believe, that to have the hours of Devotion well regulated, is a very great help to Devotion. Man is a Creature of *Habit* as well as other living Creatures. An Horſe that has been us'd

us'd to go one way, will not fail to return that way again, and when the hours of baiting come, he will go no farther: ſo the Heart doth, without any guidance or endeavour, return by its ſelf to thoſe things which it has been accuſtomed to do. Chooſe then your hours of Evening, Morning, Mid-day, at nine of clock, at three: Make a Law for ſome time never to let thoſe hours paſs, but to conſecrate them to no other thing than to Devotion; and without any trouble, your Heart will return thither at the ſame hours. Thoſe very Parts, which in us are deſtitute of Knowledge, are capable of theſe Habits: When the Stomach has been us'd to eat at certain hours, if this be not done, it feels ſomewhat wanting. The Conſcience being the Stomach of the Soul, gives it its meals, and if you happen to be wanting, it will advertiſe you on't: but have a care of doing violence to it, and being earneſt with it to hold its peace. When it minds you, amidſt your Occupations, that the hour is come, do not deferr it till another time, for it is undone if you put it out of order; 'Twill no more remind you; you your ſelf muſt be forc'd to ſollicit it, and then the Soul is in a wretchleſs condition, when the Conſcience is aſleep, when the Heart ſlumbers, and when there is need of awakening it by an expreſs Reflection.

If you ask me what hours it is to chooſe, and how many, I ſhall perhaps be very much put to it to anſwer you. Good *David* orders ſeven for himſelf; *Seven times a day do I praiſe thee.* *Daniel* had chiefly three: Our Lord retir'd whole Nights together into a Mountain apart to pray. Alas! it were to be wiſh'd we could give all our hours to God; but the neceſſities of Nature, and the infirmities of the Fleſh vote it fruitleſs,; and I know not what mood and temper thoſe *Devotes* might be of, who, we are told, paſs'd whole dayes and nights in Meditation and Contemplation. I will pronounce nothing herein, and I leave every

ry one to his own Conſcience. If we cannot give all to God, certain it is we are to reſerve to him the better part, and that amongſt our hours we ought to ſet ſome aſide, which may be proper to him, and never beſtowed upon the World. The number muſt be regulated according to the diverſity of Strengths; and I believe it ſhould increaſe according to the meaſure of the progreſs we make in Devotion. A Child cannot lift up a Burthen which a vigorous man can carry with eaſe: ſo that every one muſt regulate himſelf according to his ſtrength. 'Tis good to eat when we are hungry, and to draw nigh to God when the Heart is warm, and as often as it pleaſes to do ſo, there is no reaſon for a refuſal herein. But you are to obſerve, that if your Appetite be buried, and does not manifeſt it ſelf, you do not fail of having your ſet Repaſts, and rather love to eat without hunger, than ſtarve your ſelf for want of Food. 'Tis the ſame here; If you are ſo unhappy as to be deprived of this holy appetite of Spiritual things, do not wait till it comes, loſe not the hours of your Devotions and your Spiritual repaſts; eat without hunger, and perhaps your Appetite will be renew'd, No man in health, ſcarcely, but eats twice a day; and yet ſick People we ſee take nouriſhment much oftener; we obſerve only, that their Repaſts are very ſhort and eaſie. I am of opinion, we ought to order the ſame Diet to thoſe indiſpoſed Souls which are yet Novices in the practice of Devotion. We muſt oblige them to return oft to it, but in ſhort Exerciſes, leſt ſuch weak Souls may not take a Diſguſt at it.

If a Clock be not wound up ſometimes a day, it will not go long; the weights, that are tied to the ropes, deſcending to the Earth, whither, as ſoon as they are come, the whole Machine ſtands ſtill. The Soul is this wonderful Machine, made up of its Faculties as of Wheels and Springs, the weights of the Fleſh drawing it down. Pull it up often if you would have it go:

Lift

Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, They who look to theſe *Automatous Machines*, obſerve daily to wind them up at the ſame hours, otherwiſe they are put out of Order. And this, I ſay, is to be obſerved in the conduct of a faithful Soul.

All hours are good: for Heaven is alwayes open, and God's Throne evermore acceſſible; yet ſome there are more proper than others. Thoſe of the Morning are ſo truly God's, that we cannot rob him of them without Sacriledge. If God will have the firſt-fruits of our Herds, with much ſtronger reaſon he will have the firſt of our hours: And what time more proper to lift up our Eyes and our Hearts to the Sun of Righteouſneſs, than that wherein the ſenſible Sun ariſes upon the Earth? Is it not time then that the Morning-ſtar ariſe in our hearts, and Prayer open the Gate to Grace? At what hour, with better effect, can we lift up our hearts to God, than at the beginning of a Race, the ſucceſs whereof depends intirely on him? In the morning we ought to ſeal our hearts with holy thoughts, and fill our minds with chaſte and good *Ideas*, that the Corruption in the World, which the reſt of the day will by the Senſes give a thouſand aſſaults to our heart, may find it well fortified. This will be a morning-dew, which in falling from Heaven upon our Souls, will make them fruitful in all good works for the reſt of the day. This will be an Amulet againſt the evil air of the World without which we are not to leave our Lodgings, nor expoſe our ſelves to the rencounter of contagious Objects. As God ought to be the firſt thing in our Hearts, ſo he muſt be the laſt too: for he ſaith, I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End. Let him open the door of our thoughts in the morning, and ſhut it up in the Evening. This will be a Seal which the Devils will reſpect; tho we be diſarmed all, while aſleep, they will tremble at our ſight and will not dare to come near us. The de-

ſtroyin

ſtroying Angel in paſſing by will reverence this Impreſſion, and this fruit of the Blood of the Lamb. Theſe Evening-Devotions will be an holy Seed caſt on good Land, which will not fail to ſpring up in the morning; ſince the heart will find it no trouble to begin the preſent Journey, where it had ended the preceding one. And in as much as 'tis true, that the Soul, abandon'd to its ſelf in ſleep, is naturally carried to the laſt Objects of its waking, we need not doubt, but the dreams will be happy, and the Images which ariſe from thoſe laſt impreſſions which Piety had made upon the Heart, will be very ſweet ones.

The night it ſelf is perfectly a friend to Devotion. Tis there that recollectings are very eaſie, the Soul being not diſſipated by preſent Objects. Nothing is ſweeter than to fill the heart with God, when void of other things. God is well pleas'd if a faithful Soul makes an Altar of its bed, and makes him its vows in a retreat where are no witneſſes. Let thy body be laid provided thy Soul be elevated and thou fall upon the knees of thy Heart, as *Clemens Romanus* phraſes it. Theſe nightly Communications with God ſeem more near and ſtrict; ſince laying our ſelves down in our beds we bid fare-well to the World, and baniſh its cares and troubles from us, to give repoſe to the body. The Soul finds it ſelf in a bleſt eſtate, and at its waking being diſengaged from the World, it hath all manner of Liberty to mount up to God. Thus we ſee, that a great part of *David's* Pſalms were compos'd in the night, *I will bleſs the Lord*, ſays he in the ſixteenth Pſalm, *who hath given me Counſel: my reins alſo inſtruct me in the night ſeaſon.* He aſſures us in the ſixth Pſalm, that *he waters his bed with his Tears*: and the ſpouſe ſaith, *by night I ſought him whom my Soul loveth.* In a word, we learn from Hiſtory, that *Antony* the Patriarch of the *Hermits* complain'd very frequently of the Sun's return, very near in theſe Terms; Why comeſt thou, O Sun, to

" trouble the reſt of my Soul? why riſeſt thou ſo ſoon
" to tear me away from the ſervice of my God? why
" comeſt thou to rob me of the ſight of my true Sun?

Meditation.

THE meaſure of God's love is to have neither meaſures nor bounds: it is to contain all the degrees of Love. The true rule for the hours of Devotion is to conſecrate all our hours to him. This is what thou oughteſt to do, O my Soul, but thou canſt not. For thou draggeſt after thee a bodily priſon, which is an hindrance to thee. Thy Affections cannot be tam'd ſo far: thou art ſubject even to worldly neceſſities, which will not ſuffer it. How happy wilt thou be then, when thou art in ſuch a place, where thou mayſt give up all thy hours to thy Creator and Redeemer. There, being deliver'd from the bonds of Fleſh, thou wilt ſerve the father of Spirits in perfect Liberty. But now thou divideſt thy time betwixt thy *Employments*, thy *Divertiſements*, thy *Repaſts*, and thy *Devotions*. But then theſe four things ſhall not be diſtinct; they ſhall all be blended together. Thy continual occupation ſhall be to ſing the praiſes of thy God, and to contemplate his Glory. Thy meat and drink ſhall be to do the will of thy Father which is in Heaven. Thy Pleaſure and Divertiſement will be in a moſt intimate injoyment to poſſeſs him who is the Source of all Joy. Thou ſhalt have no more hours of Devotion; for this fourth thing will be mixt in the three others. Thou ſhalt be ever all Flame and all Fire for the ſervice of thy God: in this will conſiſt thy chief happineſs. wouldſt thou then here below approach near the Glories of Paradice? multiply and continue, as far as thou canſt, thy Commerces and Communications with God. If thou wert always with God, God would be always with thee: Now where God is, there is Paradice. When thou entereſt into thy Cloſet

with

with moſt devout Diſpoſitions, God enters there with thee, and after him a whole troop of *Angels*, *Cherubims*, and *Seraphims*: for he incamps his Angels about them that fear him, and eſpecially at ſuch times as they fear and ſerve him. No Object is more charming to the Angels, who ſeek the good and well-fare of Men, than to ſee a perſon truly devout falling on his Face to the Earth, bathing his Couch and Boſom in Tears, breathing the moſt ardent ſighs towards Heaven, carrying his Eyes thither, where his heart is, and ſtretching forth pure hands to God, that he may embrace him. There is Joy in Heaven for one devout Soul as well as for one penitent ſinner. Wherefore it is, Heaven ſeems to deſcend and come down (as it were) to this Spectacle. Labour then, O my Soul, to be ever practiſing Devotion, as well as Repentance, that Heaven may be glad, and thy God come often to thee. By theſe frequent Communications thou wilt become bright like the Face of *Moſes*. The rays of that divine *Sun* will peirce and illuminate thee; they will baniſh the Darkneſs out of thee, and melt the Ice and Coldneſs that makes thee ſo heavy and neglectful. And by beholding him often thou wilt become his Glaſs, and wilt be changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Prayer.

O *Sun of my Soul, I ſeek thee with all my Strength, hide not thy ſelf from me, and ſuffer no Eclipſe, diſperſe thoſe Clouds which cover and ſeparate thee from me, and rob me of the view of thy Light. My ſins I confeſs continually raiſe thick, filthy, and malign vapours, which may grow into Clouds, and theſe Clouds afterwards produce the Storms and Thunders of thy ſevere Juſtice, if thou wouldſt puniſh me as I deſerve. But from henceforth, O Lord, hinder theſe Vapours from ariſing, and dry up their Source. Let not my Heart be any more as a marſh full of unmoving and putrified Waters, but let it*

be a living and pure Fountain. Let it be no more an accurſed Field abounding in Poyſons, but a fertile one in Flowers and Fruits of good-living, and let none fly up to thee but ſweet and kind Exhalations, Prayers and giving of thanks, that may cauſe a ſweet-ſmelling Savour of atonement. Let thoſe ſweet vapours be chang'd into ſweet dews; and let thy Grace, falling upon my Soul like rain upon a thirſty Land, make it to rejoyce and flouriſh and bring forth fruits of Righteouſneſs. Thou art my Light, lighten me in the Darkneſs of the Night, when I call upon thee in my bed. Come and honour me with thy preſence during the abſence of all other Objects, that I may poſſeſs thee only, and nothing may rob my Soul of thee. Cauſe the ſweetneſs of this rejoycing to diſplay an heavenly fire in my Eyes, and an holy gayety over my Countenance, which may accompany me always, and defend me from thoſe many troubles and vexations whereunto I am expoſed. Let me lye down at night as in thy boſom, and let me caſt my ſelf betwixt thy arms, that I may be afraid of nothing, which is ghaſtly or terrible in Darkneſs.

CHAP. VII.

The ſecond particular Help: Solitude and Religious Aſſemblies.

WE cannot but own, with a great earneſtneſs of mind, that Devotion requires Solitude. We have our Maſter's word and deciſion in the caſe. *When thou goeſt to pray,* ſayes he, *enter into thy cloſet.* Very ſtrange Prayers were thoſe of the *Phariſees*, that prayed in the corners of Streets, or in the Market-places. Our Lord Chriſt had good ground to indict them of Hypocriſie: Solitude is neceſſary, not only to avoid that Pomp and Parade which God ſo much deteſts in all things, and eſpecially in Devotion, but alſo to make our Prayer more pure and perfect.

How

How ſhould the Soul, I wonder, be recollected into it ſelf, if a thouſand Objects lay hold on the Senſes, and draw it abroad? We muſt therefore be in ſuch a place where we need not defend it againſt the Aſſaults which ſenſual Objects make upon it. Let us retire never ſo far from the World, we ſhall be ſure to carry enough of the World along with us, and the Images of its Objects will perſecute us ſufficiently, without being voluntarily expoſed to the perſecution of the Objects themſelves. Yes, the Commerces of the faithful Soul with its God require a ſecret retiral. Our Lord is its Beloved, who caſts not his Favours upon the Crowd, and expoſes them not to the ſight of men, as St. *Bernard* ſayes, He loves Shadow and Retreat. And therefore the Spouſe will not let him go whom her Soul loveth, until ſhe has brought him into her Mothers houſe, and into her cloſet. If we have a deſign to do any thing wherein is need of Application, we ſeek a Retreat, that we may not be diſtracted: We are therefore to ſeek it for Devotion, ſince nothing in the World asks a more fix'd Conſideration. Far from all Witneſſes muſt the truly Devout Perſon be, to be intirely Free in all reſpects. Devotion has its Actions and its Words: it impreſſes its tranſports and motions upon the Soul, and the Body frequently may have its too; ſo that it ſhould not be expos'd to the view of men, who make ſo ill Judgments thereof. If theſe Reaſons have need of being upheld by Examples, we have that of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to whom the Mountains did not ſeem ſecret or ſolitary enough; ſince he added to them the darkneſs of the Night: That of *Daniel*, who ſhut the door of his Chamber to pray: That of St. *Peter*, who went upon the Houſe-top to perform his Devotions: But this Subject is ſo little diſputed, and indeed ſo little diſputable, as we need not dwell upon it longer.

The neceſſity of Solitarineſs for Devotion, may give us more extenſive Proſpects. There have been many

great men, and (I would believe) many great Saints, who have thought Devotion and Solitude were so inseparable, as that not only the truly devout were to set aside some hours of Retreat, but their whole Life ought to be consecrated to it. And 'twas this Sentiment which sometime peopled the Desarts of *Thebes*, and of *Syria*, with so many *Anchorites*. They fled the World to lift up their Souls more easily to God, and to acquire an habit of more pure and ardent Devotion. And hence perhaps might come the very name of *Devotion*, which is deriv'd from *vowing* ones self to a thing, because those Christians by a Vow, in a particular manner, consecrated themselves to God.

'Tis a matter extremely difficult to pronounce upon this sort of Life; I would not condemn all those that follow it. I do not doubt but many were led by the Spirit into the Wilderness, as our Saviour was: but I dare boldly say, that this Estate is subject to as great Temptations as a worldly life is. In my opinion, it's very much to presume on one's own Strength, to go and lye exposed to the strokes of an Enemy so potent as the Devil. In Society, if one falls, another helps him up again, but in the Wilderness he must sustain himself; he must stand upon his own bottom; he must be his own Pastor, Guide, and Director of Conscience: and he that believes he has Light enough to furnish for all these Duties, hath too high an opinion of himself. I would speak here nothing more forcible against this way of living, than what St. *Basil* himself, a great Lover and Admirer of the Monastic Life, hath writ thereon. He believes that that sort of Life is no more charitable than it is prudent. They have either need of succour themselves, or they are in a condition to give it to others. If they stand in need themselves, 'tis an imprudence to be confined in a place where they can receive none. If they can afford it to others, this is to want Charity, and to rob Society of what might be

useful

uſeful to it. And with good reaſon he ſayes, that this is to deprive ones ſelf of the Hope to hear, one day, thoſe words from our Lord's Mouth, "Thou gaveſt "meat to him that was an hungred, drink to him that "was thirſty; thou clothedſt him that was naked, "and viſitedſt him that was in Priſon. In ſhort, I fear the Remark of this Father in the ſame place is not over true, that this Life (ſo far out of the path of Humility) is not a Stair-caſe to Pride: for theſe men, comparing themſelves to themſelves, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, and ſeeing nothing more accompliſht than themſelves, perſuade themſelves they are Perfect. Every one ſees himſelf too near to know himſelf well, and does not know himſelf thoroughly enough to correct himſelf; and therefore an *Anchoret* who uſes not the eyes of another to examin himſelf, lets many ſins, without doubt, eſcape him, to which, Judges more ſevere than we are to our ſelves, would not have done that favour. To be brief; I have ſaid that ſo far is this kind of living from any great uſe to Devotion, as I believe 'tis an impediment to it: becauſe it is depriv'd of exerciſing the Works of Mercy, which are ſo neceſſary. A man in the Deſart hath his diſtractions; and if he have not a Soul of an extraordinary temper, 'tis to be fear'd, they are more dangerous than thoſe met withall in the World. A mind abandon'd, without any Guide, makes oftentimes ſtrange ſlips. The wide World, and a narrow Lowlineſs, are moſt aſſuredly two very dangerous Extremities. There is need of extraordinary Grace to thrive well in either Conditions: ſo that thoſe who have receiv'd indifferent Gifts from Heaven, are to chooſe a Life that holds the middle betwixt theſe two Extreams. But, at leaſt, 'tis without Controverſie, that Solitude is abſolutely neceſſary at hours deſtin'd to Devotion: Which is not to be taken in ſuch a manner as to do any prejudice to holy Aſſemblies or Publick Devotions. They have their Uſe for Devotion, and under Pretext of praying in

our Closet, we are never to deprive our selves of so necessary an Aid to Piety. True it is, every where else our Senses are enemies to Self-recollection; but there both the Senses and Imagination favour the motions of the devout Soul. The looking upon Churches, which are God's houses, the presence of Angels, who assist in those places; the society of a multitude of Souls that joyn their Vows as well as their Voices together; the Word of God resounding in our Ears; the Prayers that are united, and being conceived by many hearts, make up but one Vow: All these things extremely help the Soul to make its elevations, and serve very much to banish worldly *Ideas*, to make holy ones succeed in their stead. Nay, 'tis not impossible too, but that among such a crowd we may conserve Solitude it self. A Soul truly devout, in such places, is so collected into its self, that all the Objects which might do it an injury cannot find it; the faithful Person is in the Closet of his own heart; he leaves no door open but for God's Word, and for things able to instill Piety: but the doors are shut against the vain Objects that are too often to be seen in such places. "There is a Spiritual So-"litude as well as a Corporeal, *sayes St. Bernard*, and "that is only in the midst of a throng, which is exempt "from vain and frivolous thoughts. But 'tis an horrible Profaneness to have indevout Dispositions in the Church, to have there an heart open to all Vanities, to go thither to see and to be seen, to hear to get matter to play upon, and to catch at Syllables and Words. How great an account will these People have to make! 'Tis enough sure to have offended man, and God himself, all the dayes in the Week, there needs no coming on the Sunday to declare War against him in his face. I shall not inlarge here to speak of the manner after which we should act in Religious Assemblies, because I design here only to give Rules for Closet-Devotion.

Medi-

Meditation.

WHere ſhall I find an happy Solitude, that may be to me an aſſured Sanctuary againſt the Perſecution of the enemies of my Soul? If I go from the World, I carry it along with me; if I enter into my Cloſet, I am followed by a crowd of fleſhly thoughts, that perſecute me cruelly. When I would ſave my ſelf in Deſarts, and dwell in the Rocks with the Owl and Cormorant, Vulturs are there, thoſe griping Cares that would tear and prey upon my Entrails. I ſhould be aſſail'd there by Flocks of Birds, and a multitude of vain and light Thoughts, which would lift me up from my ſelf, to throw me into the World. What muſt I do to remedy this great Evil? Thou knoweſt the Remedy, O Lord, I do not know it, do thou teach me. Here below there is no Haven that can ſhelter and ſhrowd me from theſe Tempeſts; no charms that can lay theſe Devils, and conjure down theſe Fantoms of my Imagination. I muſt make me a new heart; for this is not ſo much the World's fault as my own. 'Tis not becauſe it purſues me, but for that I have placed it within me, and, which way ſoever I go, I carry it with me. If my heart were pure and clean, in the midſt of Cities and the greateſt Aſſemblies I ſhould find Solitude. My Soul being drawn up into it ſelf would be environed on all ſides with a contempt of the World as with a Rampart; The love of God and Godlineſs would keep the Avenues; They would be a good Guard, and would drive all Objects away which might come to interrupt me, ſo as I ſhould be alwayes in a place of ſafety.

Prayer.

O *Bleſſed Lord, create in me a clean Heart, purifie it from the vain Images of the World, which Sin and Satan have engrav'd in my Soul: that, under the Wings of thy good Spirit and Love, I may find that Sanctuary againſt my ſelf, which I ſeek every where, but find no where. But why, O my God, ſhould not thy Grace, while we are in the fleſh, be ſufficient to deaden all its motions? why ſhould I have always theſe* Amalekites *and* Moabites *round about me, while I march and advance towards the heavenly* Canaan, *and the* Jeruſalem *which is above? why have we not here below thoſe Rivers of Grace, and why cannot I have a Floud and Sea to waſh my Entrails and cleanſe them from theſe miſerable Impurities? It is thy will O God that my Temptations be always near me, and the* Philiſtines *be always upon me, that I may watch and not ſleep on the lap of* Daliſa. *It is thy will that I have continuall a Thorn in my Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me, leaſt I ſhould be exalted above Meaſure. O my Saviour, command that the leaſt Temptation do not ſeize upon me, which is not common to man; give me an happy ſucceſs in all my Temptations, and ſtrength to be able to bear them. It is true, thy Grace is ſufficient for me: let it not fail me then; let it work its work in the midſt of my Infirmities; let it diſperſe my different thoughts; let it calm the Agitations of my Soul: let it make me to find a Sanctuary, where being far from Noiſe, Paſſions, and Affections, I may conſecrate to thee my Watchings, my Words, and my Thoughts, where I may be able to ſing thy Praiſes Eternally, and celebrate thy divine Majeſty.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The third particular Direction to help Devotion: Meditation, and Prayer.

THE Soul comes into the World at leaſt as ill inſtructed in the affairs of Grace as in thoſe of Nature: It is in all reſpects a *plain* unſcrolled *Table*, and an Ignorant, which has need to be informed in every thing. Very eaſily it acquires the Knowledges which are neceſſary to the Conduct of Life, becauſe thoſe Directions paſs to it thorough the Senſes, and theſe Objects are of its own ſize: but it hath need of the greateſt endeavour to attain thoſe *Notices*, which regard the *Spiritual Life*, ſince thoſe Objects are diſproportionate to its Strength; and yet thoſe Knowledges are of abſolute neceſſity to the practiſing the Virtues, and particularly that of Devotion. This laſt Virtue is made up of Love and Zeal, but we have not them but according to the degree of our Knowledge: and therefore, I know not of what nature thoſe ignorant Devotions can be which are deſtitute of all Light, and are not guided but by the Senſes: theſe are, it may be, rather weakneſſes of Conſtitution than effects of Grace. The Devotions of ignorant People are almoſt ever groſs and ſuperſtitious; they are ordinarily fix'd to ſenſible Objects; whereas in Religion all is divine and intellectual: the Object of their Worſhip is moſtly an *Agnus Dei*, a Relick, or an *Image:* and God, who ought to be the ſole Object of our Devotions, has ſcarce any ſhare in their Veneration. I do'nt require our Chriſtian to be learned, and that he have prey'd either into the Secrets of Nature, or alſo into the higheſt myſteries of Grace by an over-exact and curious Reſearch. I hold that that is more diſadvantageous than profitable to

Devo-

Devotion: but the devout Soul muſt be ſpiritual enough to liſt it ſelf up above the Senſes by Meditation. Meditation is an excellent Operation of the Soul, whereby it penetrates the out-ſides of Objects, and ſounds them to the very heart: 'tis a reflected Action that rouls its ſubject upon the Heart till it makes deep Impreſſions; 'tis an happy Proſpect, by which the Soul every moment diſcovers more and more Wonders in that which it is about: but theſe Diſcoveries are not nice Speculations to be communicated to others; they are particular Sentiments and Applications which the Soul makes and which are only for it. We cannot doubt but this is of abſolute neceſſity to Devotion; for this does not embrace it's Subject but proportionably as Meditation makes it to enter therein. Devotion is an agitation of a vigorous and lively Soul, whereby we are lifted up to God and to our ſovereign Good; and therefore, the more Devotion applies us to this great Object, and lets us ſee the depths of his Goodneſs, the more ardent doth Devotion become: ſo that this is to be the principal Subject of our Contemplations. God is good, either in himſelf, or in reſpect had to us; in himſelf, becauſe he is great, majeſtic, bounteous, merciful: if we did not partake of the Fruits of theſe Divine Vertues, nevertheleſs, God would not ceaſe to poſſeſs them, and conſequently, he wou'd be infinitely amiable. We cannot think too often on theſe Attributes of God: this is one of the moſt efficacious means which *David* uſes to awaken his drowſie Devotion, *Awake, O my Tongue*, ſaith he, and thereupon he ſings God Almighty's Power in his Works, his Majeſty ſhining forth in the Heavens, his Juſtice in his Judgments, his Wiſdom in the Government of the World, his Mercy towards Man. But, becauſe *Intereſt* has ſo great a ſway with us, we are to joyn to this Conſideration that of God's Benefits, to deſcend into the Abyſſes of his Love, and

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to consider him in *Jesus* Christ reconciling the World unto himself: we must essay to dive [if possible it be] into the depths of his Mercy, which are found every where and in all parts of the Dispensation of our eternal Salvation: above all, we cannot fix our selves too much upon the Passion of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus* Christ; we shall see there a thousand Objects able to mollifie our Soul, since God's Love to Mankind appears there in all it's Extension. From general Considerations it is good to come to particular Applications; We ought to conceive how much we stand indebted to God for freeing us from so many Miseries to raise us up to such glorious hopes: in short, and to speak all in a Word, the Object of our Meditation is as vast as God, Nature, and Grace altogether: for there are no Flowers in the World but we may gather Honey from 'em: we need not fear therefore, that we can drain a Subject of so great a Bigness. But how comes it to pass then our Meditations are frequently so dry, and our Recollections so barren? It is not from the Seed, but from the bad Ground "Whence comes it, "saith an Ancient Father, that our Mind is found de- "stitute of good Thoughts, as if there were nothing "well-pleasing to God wherewith we cou'd entertain "our selves? This comes not, *says he*, but from a care- "lessness of Spirit, for the subject is inexhaustible; "and if the Eye cannot reach the end of Wonders to "be seen, much less can the Mind attain it in those "that are to be conceived: If the Eyes cease to see "the Light when it is day, 'tis not for that the Light "is exstinguish'd, but it proceeds from the dissipation "of the Sight. If you pierce and open a Field in all parts with a Plow-share, it will render you an abundant Harvest, otherwise 'twill continue barren; and even if you penetrate very deep you may find springs of living Water. In like manner, if you open this great Subject, to wit, God and his Works, by pro-

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found and frequent Meditations, there will proceed from thence Sources of Conſolations and Inſtructions.

Laſtly, make no difficulty to repaſs oft upon the ſame ſubject for to make it familiar to you. Our Soul is depending upon the Body during the time we are upon Earth, and the moſt ſpiritual *Idea*'s are form'd in us by bodily motions: ſo that it is highly uſeful to let the Thoughts of things divine paſs and repaſs frequently in our ſelves, to the intent we may give an Inclination to the *Animal Spirits*, which may carry 'em that aways, and at length we ſhall find they will go naturally in that Road, in ſuch ſort, as without deſign, and before we are aware, we ſhall think on good things. I ſhall ſay one Word more for the comfort of thoſe Minds which are not capable either of a piercing Inſight or a ſtrong Application: and that is, That they are to be griev'd if they do not find themſelves forcible enough to drive on their *Reaſonings* ſo far, and if Conceptions fail them, provided this comes not from any Coldneſs. Some ſhort, but frequent, Meditations, whereby a faithful Perſon of the meaner ſort does often apply his Mind to the Author of his Salvation and Gods Benefits, may ſerve inſtead of long Reflections when one is not capable of them.

To help Devotion, we are, without doubt, to call in the reading of good Books; for, we muſt not imagine we can draw all from our own Well: and among thoſe Books the Holy Scripture is as much above all others as God is above Men, and the Sun above the Stars of the ſixth Magnitude. This is that Word which is as powerful and piercing as a two-edged Sword; this is that Fire which can warm our Entrails, and make us ſay, *Does not our Heart burn within us?* One only Paſſage in *St. Paul* (*Let us walk honeſtly as in the day, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambering and Wantonneſs, not in Strife and Envying; but put ye on the Lord* Jeſus *Chriſt*) wrought the Converſion of St. *Auſtin.*

ſtin. In every Page of this Book we ſhall find Gods Benefits, and his excellent Promiſes ſo proper to awaken Devotion: we ſhall find there many Examples of heavenly Meditations, fit to lift up the Soul, and guide us in our own. Eſpecially the Book of *Pſalms* is an ineſtimable Treaſure for devout Souls; and if we could prize it, and ſay of it beyond what the Ancients did, we could never ſay enough. 'Twere to be wiſh'd, that this Treaſure were laid up entirely in our Memory, that every moment we might be able to repeat them to our own Heart. We ſhould, if it were poſſible, habituate our Mind not to conceive its Thoughts, and form its Meditations, but in the terms which the Holy Ghoſt uſeth in the Pſalms.

To the reading of Holy Scripture, it will be profitable to add that of other good Books: and herein I would give a Direction which *ſome* People have found very good; which is, to chooſe ſuch Places and Chapters of Devotion which have once warmed you, and to return often to the ſame places, that your Heart may get an Habit of awakening it ſelf at that view. 'Tis the ordinary *Turn* of all *Minds* to joyn certain motions of Heart with certain *Images*, ſo as that aſſoon as the Images preſent 'emſelves to the Mind, thoſe motions ariſe in the Heart: for example, if a Man has run an extream danger in a Wood, the Image of a Foreſt will never offer it ſelf to his Imagination, but his Heart is ſeiz'd upon by ſome Chillneſs. So our Heart having been once mov'd at the reading of ſome pious Diſcourſe which had touch'd it to the Quick, will not fail of being awaken'd at the preſence of the ſame Thoughts, in caſe we read them with a devout Intention and a deſign to be touch'd therewith. This may be compar'd to what happens to barking Dogs, which are quiet or otherwiſe as ſoon as they hear the Voice of thoſe they are acquainted withal: ſo the Heart being become familiar with thoſe pious thoughts that

that had mov'd it oftentimes, will evermore perceive in their Preſence very near the ſame motions: for it is not ſo with reading in holy Books as in Profane; theſe pleaſe the firſt time, the ſecond the pleaſure ceaſes, but the third they are moſt inſupportable. The ſame thing perhaps may happen if you read a Book of Devotion for Divertiſement, to ſee there the neatneſs of Phraſe and the beauty of Thoughts: as this way of reading is for the Mind and not for the Heart, one thing will not pleaſe you a ſecond time. This Thought diſcovers a Myſtery to us ſomewhat obſcure, why that which touches ſome ſhould not have the ſame influence over others? Now the Reaſon is, becauſe all do not read with the ſame Diſpoſitions and the ſame Intentions. A Preacher, that would preach an hour upon a pious Subject, will read Books which may inſtruct him therein; but if he has not a Soul naturally very devout, they will have no great effects upon him, becauſe he comes with no Intention to be moved by them; he only ſeeks for matter to fill up his hour. Our Heart does very near what we would have it do; inſomuch, as pious reading, that it may be an help to Devotion, ought to be done with a moſt devout Intention, without which Condition it will be a very hard matter to make any progreſs in it.

But, as much as the reading of good Books brings in Auxiliaries to Devotion, ſo much it is ruined by the reading of bad ones. 'Tis a great ſhame to *Chriſtianity*, that now adays it makes more account of ſome miſchievous Books than ever did the moſt corrupted *Paganiſm*. Our Age, and in particular, this Kingdom, might be juſtly noted with Infamy for that ſwarm of *Romances* which the effeminacy of our Hearts, the corruption of our Minds, and the wiles of the Devil, have ſent into the World. We muſt needs be great Lovers of *Lying*, ſince fifty Years have produced more Fables than ſix thouſand Years could produce Hiſto-

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ries: and the Church muſt needs be very much corrupted, to ſuffer, and (as it were) to authorize ſuch ſhameleſs Products, ſo full of impure Imaginations. Every devout Soul will have thoſe *Legends* in Deteſtation; for, certain it is, that nothing puts the Heart into greater Diſorder. I wiſh People be ſafe from the *laſt* Corruption, and they proceed not even to the acting and imitating thoſe irregular Examples in good earneſt which they ſaw before in Jeſt: however, 'tis ſure, that from the reading of theſe Books the Mind returns loaded with Images, which grieve and drive away the Spirit of God, and which are abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Spirit of Devotion.

Meditation.

IF thou art ignorant, O my Soul, in the things which concern thy Salvation, it's wholly thy own fault: Thy God opens two great books before thine Eyes, where thou mayſt be taught and inſtructed in the wonders of Heaven and of thy Salvation. Often have I caſt my Eyes upon Nature, upon Heaven, Earth, the Mountains, Rivers, Fields, and Foreſts: oft have I carried my Eyes to the Planets and to the Stars. But to my confuſion, I avow, theſe Contemplations were barren, done negligently without Application and Reflexion. Do that therefore now, O my Soul, which thou haſt never done yet: view the Heavens and admire their Greatneſs and vaſt Extenſion; Acknowledge the Greatneſs of the Maker, his Strength, his Wiſdom, his Power: See how he has on purpoſe painted himſelf in all places, and left his foot-ſteps whereſoever he hath paſt. Look upon the Sun, which pours forth ſo much fire, which men call the Light of the World: This is the Image of Thy God, who is Light himſelf: *In thee is the Well of Life, and in thy Light ſhall we ſee Light.* That innumerable multitude of fires that burn in the Firmament, is the Emblem of thoſe glorious Souls, which ſhine in the higheſt Heaven of the bleſſed.

bleſſed. The rapidity of thoſe vaſt and prodigious Machines, which roul over thy head, ought to make thee think of that robuſt Art which gives them their ſwing and impreſſes upon 'em their Motions. The equality and juſtneſs of thoſe Motions, as regular as ſwift, preaches to thee the Wiſdom and Evenneſs of God's Actions, who does nothing but what is juſt and reaſonable. The magnificence of thoſe viſible Heavens may without much ado conduct thy Meditation to the thought of another life, and give thee ſome foretaſte and conception of the Glory God prepares for thee in Paradice. Thoſe viſible heavens ſo Splendid, ſo Beautiful, are but the threſhold of that Palace. where God makes ready an abode for thee. Oh my Soul how Rich and Glorious muſt that houſe be, whoſe very Avenues and Entries are ſo fine and pompous; If from the heavens thou deſcendeſt into the Air, which is the region of Storms and Tempeſts, of Rains and Dews; in the latter thou wilt ſee the Emblems of God's Favour, and in the former, the Meſſengers of his Vengance, and the Inſtruments of his Fury. The one will lead thee to the Conſideration of his Juſtice, and the other to the Conſideration of his Mercy. If thou deſcendeſt to the Earth, thou wilt diſcover almoſt every where around thee an incredible multitude of ſundry Objects, that will inſtruct thee divers ways: Some as well as the Heavens will ſpeak to thee of God's Wiſdom and Power; Others will tell thee of thy own Weakneſs, and Vanity of Death, and the Neceſſity of dying, of the Inconſtancy of humane things, and will give thee an hundred other Leſſons. But all this is nothing to compare with the Knowledge, to be had from the reading of that other book, which God hath dictated to his Prophets and Apoſtles. 'Tis there thou mayeſt ſee the Abyſſes of the Divine Wiſdom, the infinity of his Love, and the depths of his Mercy. Without engaging thy ſelf very deep in theſe Abyſſes, what

what Fruit canſt thou not reap from the Death of my Saviour and the Contemplation of his Croſs? thou wilt learn there how thou art to love, for that is the School of Love: thou wilt view thy Divine Saviour eaten up with the zeal of God's Houſe, burnt with the Flames of Charity. He ſo loved the World that he gave himſelf up to Death for the World; and that to a ſhameful, cruel, and tormenting death, even that of the Croſs. He expos'd himſelf to all the arrows of God's Wrath; he ſuckt the venom, and underwent the weight of his Indignation, and for whom? for his Enemies. 'Tis thus, O my Soul, thou muſt Love: This is but a very ſmall part of the things thou mayſt learn in that heavenly Book.

Prayer.

BUT, O Lord, I read in vain, I meditate without ſucceſs. O my Sun, infuſe thy Rayes into my Heart; open mine Eyes, that I may ſee the wond'rous things of thy Law. Make thy Word to be in me like a two edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing of my Soul, my Joynts and Marrow. Thy Word is truth, ſanctifie me by thy Truth. Let my Heart burn within me, when thou ſpeakeſt, and declareſt to me the Scriptures. Let me receive thy word with a thirſty Soul, and let it become unto me a Spring of living Waters bubling up to Eternal Life, that I may be conducted by the Rivers of thy Grace to the Ocean of Glory.

CHAP. IX.

The fourth particular help to Devotion; The use of Prayer.

I Do not design here to make any Commendation of Prayer, nor to display all it's Uses; which both the Antients and Moderns have done very Amply. I shall only say, that 'tis one of the surest means to purifie the Soul; since there is no Action whereby we approach nearer to God, no time wherein he communicates himself more to us. He hath been very often observ'd to give his Extraordinary inspirations in Prayer. In praying St *Peter* fell into an Extasie, *Paul* was ravisht to the third Heaven; *Cornelius* in his Prayers receiv'd the Vision of an Angel: *Monica* St *Austin*'s Mother after her Prayers and Tears for the Salvation of her Son, had in her dream that excellent Revelation of his Conversion. An Angel tells her, *Afflict not thy self, thy Son is with thee.* As God is the Sun of our Soul, and jets his beams perpendicularly into our Hearts, he must necessarily clarifie and heat them; he dispersés the vapours of the Inferiour part and draws his own Image there. Now this Communication of the Raies of Grace is never made more than in Prayer.

I shall not stay to examine any further the Conditions with which Prayers should be made to be Devout: it's already shown enough, that they ought to be Attentive, Persevering and Ardent: I shall only give here two Advices, the one to avoid Wearinesse, the other to avoid Distraction. First I say, that few Souls are capable of long Prayers: For to render a Prayer perfectly devout there's need of an extreme Contention of Mind, an extraordinary Elevation, and an entire loosening ones self from the World. Now these Actions do a kind of Violence to the Soul, which naturally tends to

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a releasing of it self; and therefore they cannot be of any long Continuance. If we give no relaxation to the Heart, it takes it, and rambles some where or other in spite of our teeth: so as I would have the exercises of Devotion to be long, tho divided into little spaces of time; that they have many parts, and each of 'em be short. Devotion is composed of three principal Acts, Reading, Meditation, and Prayer: each of these need not be done presently, so as to follow one another, but they may be mingled: for we must allow some grains to the Souls Weakness, and we must keep it from disgust by variety: A little reading may be the first degree of it's Elevation; a little meditation on that reading will lift it a degree higher; and after the reading and meditation, a short Prayer will lead it to the highest degree of forgetting the World: after which, it will return wholly new to reading and Meditation in the same order. In Prayer, it will fly through the Air by the force of its own Wings: and, at its return to reading, it will do like those Birds, that, weary with flying, come to repose themselves, not on the Earth, but some very high Tree of their own choice; so our devout Soul will come to rest it self, not by falling on the Earth, for 'twill never set foot there, nor permit the mind to return to the World; but it will continue elevated upon the Props of the holy Prophets and Apostles; *Ur* and *Aaron* will sustain it, lifted up towards the Heaven, and from thence taking its flight, it will by little and little rise upon the Wings of Meditation, untill it return by Prayers whither it was first lifted up. This method, undoubtedly, will give it time to renew its strength; it cannot hold out long, if its course be push'd on to the utmost of its vigour; but by taking breath, and marching fairly on from time to time, it will make a very great advance in a day.

The other Direction I would give, regards those, who having not been busied about the operations of the

the Mind, are leſs proper for the great Elevations. Theſe People ordinarily make their Devotions in Prayers pronounced by heart; from which way Diſtractions are almoſt inſeparable. Theſe I would counſel to endeavour to untye themſelves from Words, and hold only to the Senſe. I do not mean, that in their Family-Prayers they ſhould diſpenſe themſelves from their Forms: I know very well that all the World has not the gift of forming their thoughts, and putting them into an order which may edifie the Publick; but for the Devotions of the Cloſet, they are rather to be made by Heart than by the Tongue. When the Imagination does not make ſome endeavour for the production of its Thoughts and the choice of its Words, in following the beaten Road, which it fears not to loſe; it never fails of going ſomewhither elſe, as having nothing to do in the place where we would retain it: but when it gives Attention to the manner in which is neceſſary to expreſs the things which the Heart has conceiv'd, the Heart and the Imagination uniting their Forces make up a compleat Attention. I cannot endure to hear ſome ſay, That all the World is not capable of compoſing: all are not able to compoſe for Men, but to compoſe for God they are able. Let us make never ſuch Efforts to ſpeak well, we ſtammer in the Mouth before the Lord: and with relation to God; there can be no other difference betwixt the moſt eloquent and him that is leaſt ſo, than between one Child and another. God underſtandeth all Languages and all Stiles; he requires no Order nor Elegance; the moſt confuſed Thoughts, that come in a Crowd from the Heart, are often moſt pleaſing to him: he hears the Sighs of the Dumb, he knows what we deſire better than we can ſpeak or oftentimes conceive: for, *The Spirit of God*, as St. *Paul* ſays, *maketh Interceſſion for us with Groanings, which cannot be uttered.* After all, there are none

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but know what they want, and by consequence, none but can pray; for, Prayer is nothing but a weaving of Desires for those things which we stand in need of for the present Life, the Salvation of the Soul, and the Life to come. The Passions are eloquent, and the Imagination is warmed by its sympathy with the Heart; wherefore, those Persons that excuse themselves upon the smallness of their Light, when they are inflamed with Choler never want Words: and certainly, if their Heart be heated with the Fire of Devotion, the Imagination will be very sensible of it, and they cannot complain of want of Thoughts or Expressions.

Meditation.

THou hast never well comprised, O my Soul, how much honour thy God does thee in permitting thee to cast thy self at his Feet; thou art not sensible of this Favour. Thou believest that God does owe thee it for that thou wilt humble thy self before him. Thou remembrest not how dear and scarce are the Audiences before the Kings of the earth, which yet are in the presence of God but a Shadow, a Nothing. The King of Kings is pleased to lend his ear to thee, to hear thee, to succour thee; his Throne is accessible at all times. To approach thither there is no need either of Favour or Friends, or Credit, or painful Sollicitations, or troublesome Attendings: notwithstanding, what is that Throne, and how great its Magnificence and Glory! Thereon God is seated, environed with a Light whose lustre dazles the eyes of *Seraphims*; all around millions of Angels and Arch-Angels falling upon their Faces: on the right hand Rivers of Milk and Honey, which his Children drink of; on the left are Torrents of Fire to devour his Adversaries; on the one side is Hell and Death, and the dreadful Ministers of Divine Vengeance, and on the other Heaven and Paradise, with the glorious Rewards which God prepares for those whom he loves. Thou dost

doſt not ſee this, O my Soul, and therefore thou art the leſs touch'd; but thou oughtſt to believe it though the Veil of thy Fleſh rob thee of the ſight. Therefore repreſent to thy ſelf the Magnificence of that Throne, tremble, admire, and be fill'd with Gratitude; for that being corrupted by the Commerce thou haſt with a miſerable Body, abiding in an Houſe of Clay, and having thy Seat in the Duſt, thou canſt, nevertheleſs, at all times with liberty preſent thy ſelf before him who ſits upon the Cherubims, who flies upon the Wings of the Wind, who maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Miniſters a Flame of Fire. Thou haſt the permiſſion to pray, but thou knoweſt not how to pray, and that becauſe thou knoweſt not to love. One intimate Friend never wants things to diſcourſe on to another: when our Heart is perfectly opened to any one, and we have received his Soul into our Breaſt, we are never ſhort. Alas, my Soul! If thou lovedſt thy God perfectly thou wouldſt be never weary with entertaining him; never would thy Imagination be congealed, thy Tongue remain ſpeechleſs, or thou want Words; thy Mouth would pour it ſelf forth like a Torrent, and thy Prayers would roul like a Flame: but thou languiſheſt in thy Prayers, ſince thou doſt not ſpeak to God as thy neareſt and beſt Friend; the barrenneſs of thy Heart comes from the coldneſs of thy Love.

Prayer.

O Holy Spirit, which art Love it ſelf in the moſt adorable Trinity, O Spirit of Prayer, make Interceſſion for me with dumb interrupted Groans, and ſuch as cannot be expreſt. Teach me how I ought to pray. I know almoſt what ought to be the Matter of

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my Prayers, but I am ignorant how to give them their form. I feel in my ſelf a Chaos of confuſed Thoughts and Motions, which I cannot unmixe or diſentangle: the Light is found blended with Darkneſs, worldly with heavenly thoughts. O holy Spirit, which at the world's beginning didſt in the like Chaos draw Light out of Darkneſs, and Order out of Confuſion, ſtretch forth thy wings upon the wavering waters of my thoughts, and hatch them into well conceiv'd, formed, and digeſted Prayers. Thou makeſt the dumb to ſpeak, and giveſt Eloquence to thoſe that are ſlow of ſpeech: Touch my Tongue with a coal from thy Altar, that my Lips may be purified, my mouth opened, and I may declare thy Praiſes. Warm my heart, and fill it with devout and pious thoughts, that from the abundance of my heart my mouth may ſpeak. And thou, O Lord Jeſus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, our great High-Prieſt, receive my Prayers as Incenſe, and carry them before that adorable Throne upon which thy Father ſitteth; make them to ſmoke before him; make them a ſweet ſmelling Odour of Atonement; that theſe calves of my Lips may be acceptable to him: and becauſe my Offerings are imperfect, cover them with thy perfect Righteouſneſs; obtain, through thy Interceſſions, what my Prayers alone would never obtain.

CHAP. X.

The fifth particular help to Devotion: Faſting and Mortification.

NONE can deny, that Faſting and Mortification are moſt neceſſary helps to Devotion, unleſs they will deny the Scripture, and the Maximes of the Fathers of the Church. The Scripture ſeldom ſeparates Prayer from Faſting: it gives to both joyntly the force of driving away the moſt dangerous Demons. *This kind of Devil goeth not out but by Prayer and Faſting.* The Fleſh is an head-ſtrong Horſe, which we cannot manage but by holding in the Bridle; it's a Lion, which we muſt not feed ſo long till he is grown fat, unleſs we would augment his Cruelty, and caſt our ſelves into the danger of being devoured by him. The Body (if we mark) is the ſame Fleſh, whereof the Goſpel complains ſo ſtrongly and in ſo many places: of which 'tis ſaid, that it is an Enemy to God, and its fruits are Debauchery, Strife, Sedition, Murder, Hatred, Envying, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs. So that to hinder the product of theſe fruits, 'tis good to keep this plant in continual great dryneſs: for if we beſprinkle this root of bitterneſs with carnal Pleaſures, it will ſhoot up its ſprouts on high, and turn us out of the way of our Salvation. As plants, which are very tall, and ſurmount their Neighbours, leave them in a bad Eſtate, in ſucking all the fatneſs of the Earth from 'em: ſo the Fleſh grows not fat but at the Expence of the Soul, which it deprives of Comfort, and leaves it in a great bareneſs of Fruit. A great meal is a very bad preparative for the duties of Piety: we cannot be in the Kitchin and the Cloſet at the ſame time: and while the Soul is employ'd in its Rooms about ſeething and digeſting

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its Victuals and distributing its Nourishment, it is not in a state to be transported in places destin'd to Contemplation and Meditation. It lyes groveling beneath thick Clouds and foggy Vapours, which render the heart unfit to lift it self up. "The abundance of delicious "meats [says a Father] send smoky Exhalations like "Clouds that interrupt the Illumination, which is made "in the understanding by the Holy Ghost. Wherefore "*Moses*, that he might see God without a Cloud, "stayed forty days upon the Mount without eating or "drinking, with design that the superiour part of his "Soul might remain disengag'd from Trouble, and the "Obscurities of the lower part. Ease and Abundance "of Bread cause the sins of *Sodom*: and Uncleanness of of Life is the consequence of the mouth's Excess. After the use of many delicate meats and drinks, the blood is all over inflam'd, which gives a Disposition to all carnal Actions, and an Inclination to worldly Joy, which is ever immoderate. *The People sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.* We must therefore, of absolute necessity, observe the Rules of Sobriety, and nourish the Body only for Life's sake, We must give it what is necessary, and deny it superfluities, that it be never able to rebell against us. And frequently we must retrench, even the necessary things, that we may master it the more: for the Flesh when kept under, contributes much to make the heart contrite; and the less tye the Soul has to the Body, the more easily it lifts it self up to God. When we fast our Devotions are not interrupted by sleep; they are not corrupted by involuntary Motions; they are not viciated by dishonest Thoughts. In the mean while, touching the practice and use of Fasting, divers advices may be given. First, we are not to hold it for a part of Devotion, and as a worship wherewith we serve God: *For the Kingdom of Heaven is neither meat nor drink*: it is only an help to Devotion. This first consideration furnishes us

with an other: which is, that we uſe not faſting as Devotion it ſelf; for to faſt whilſt we are travelling, or about our Employments, is no work of great merit or great uſe. The firſt conſideration has a third ſtill that ſprings from it: and that is, that Faſting is not to be employ'd no farther in Devotion than as it may be an aid to it: and by conſequence we cannot give any certain rules either for the Practice, or the Duration of it. Some tempers there are ſo weak, that faſting is ſo far from being an help to Devotion, as it may be a great lett to it; becauſe it immediately caſts the body into a certain negligence, which hinders the Soul from ſoaring up. Again, there are thoſe can't be tamed but by long mortifications, and theſe ought not to ſpare themſelves. Others maſter themſelves more eaſily, and theſe muſt know themſelves; but nevertheleſs they are to take care that the weakneſs of their body do not ſerve for a pretext to diſpence themſelves from neceſſary mortifications.

Yet we cannot approve thoſe cruelties which ſome uſe towards the body, in treating it like a declared Enemy, without ſparing either Fire or Sword. We put not on here the Spirit of Controverſie, we leave every one to his own Conſcience. We ſay only, that altho thoſe exceſſes be not new, they are never the better for all that. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory ſupplies us with examples enow, I confeſs, of theſe extravagant Mortifications: But I had rather ſtand to the diciſion of St. *Baſil*, who is not to be ſuſpected in this cauſe, ſince he was a great Aſſociate in Faſtings and Mortifications However he repeats many times the precept of Mediocrity, and inſiſts very long upon it. He denyes his Virgins and his Hermits the uſe of exceſſive Mortifications, even to his ſaving [in the Book of Virginity] "that the burthen of heavy and exceſſively pamper'd "Fleſh does not bring more incumbrance to the ele- "vation of the Soul, than the weakneſs of a ſick Body,

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"thinn'd by a long and exceſſive Mortification. And therefore he expreſly orders, That neceſſity be the rule of Faſting and Abſtinence.

And now follows another neceſſary Direction upon this Subject; That bodily Mortification and Faſting does not reach to the very bottom of the Soul, nor mortifie all ſort of Vice. An Ancient ſaid, That the "Devil being not able to lay hold or take Poſſeſſion "of a Body maſter'd by great Mortifications, ſeizes "upon the Soul all naked, and by it, and in it, begins "and conſummates the carnal Deſires. If the Soul without the Body be capable of acting and committing bodily Sins though Mortification be in the way, how ſhall it heal it ſelf, by this means, of thoſe Diſeaſes which are intirely in it, as Envy, Pride, and Self-love? So we ſee theſe Paſſions reign very often and very imperiouſly in thoſe Men of Scourges and Sack-cloth. This ſo bloody War which is wag'd againſt the Body, and, in appearance, renounces all Self-love, can be no more, in the moſt part, than a Self-love very delicate, which leads to Glory by extraordinary Paths, that it may arrive there the more ſurely. From all this, I conclude, that the Mortification which St. *Paul* requires of us, when he ſays, *Mortifie your Members which are upon the Earth*, and that which we have judged neceſſary for Devotion, goes much farther than bodily Mortification. To ſtifle that Self-love, that Pride, thoſe Jealouſies, Hatreds, Envyings, and even Ambition and Covetouſneſs, there is need of another ſort of Faſting; that is, an Abſtinence from all Actions which may nouriſh thoſe Vices. So I conclude this Chapter with thoſe incomparable Words of the Father, "Beware of defining the excellence of "Faſting, by a ſole Abſtinence from Meats and "Drinks; for true Faſting conſiſts in abſtaining from "Evil. Thou doſt not eat Fleſh, but thou teareſt "thy Brother in pieces; thou abſtaineſt from Wine,

" but thou abſtaineſt not from doing Outrage; thou " waiteſt till the Evening to eat, but thou ſpendeſt " the day in a Law Suit. Woe to thoſe that are " drunk, though not with Wine. Anger inebriates " the Soul, and, as well as Wine, caſts it out of the " limits of Reaſon.

Meditation.

THIS of wine, I confeſs, is a moſt dangerous Drunkenneſs, and Gluttony is a moſt filthy ſin. Theſe ſins are great Enemies to Devotion: and therefore Faſting, Abſtinence and Sobriety are very neceſſary to ſuccour and nouriſh Piety. But, O my Soul, take care of thy ſelf, theſe vices regard the body chiefly. There is another ſort of Drunkenneſs and Gluttony which immediately concerns the Soul, and is, it may be, ſtill more dangerous: this Drunkenneſs is Pride, and this Gluttony is Avarice and Ambition. How many Souls do I ſee in the World made drunk with Vanity and an high Opinion of themſelves! They are fly-blown with Pride, that all the Earth cannot contain them, they ſtretch themſelves ſo far and are lift up ſo high. This Drunkenneſs cauſes them to make a thouſand Trips and falſe Steps; their Footings are ever awry and oblique, like

like thoſe of drunken Men; they have a great Conceit of their own Wiſdom, Prudence, and Strength: all this fails 'em ſometimes, they reel, ſtagger, and at laſt fall; for Pride comes before Ruin. Examine thy ſelf, O my Soul! ſee if thou haſt not a tincture of this Evil, and if thou be not inebriated with the Thought of thy own Righteouſneſs and thy own Merit. Alas, if thou denyeſt it thou knoweſt thy ſelf ill! This is a great Pride, the belief of having none; for, it is to believe thou art worth as much as thou eſteemeſt thy ſelf; but there is no Man but eſteems himſelf more than he is really worth. Thou wilt ſay to me, perhaps, thou haſt an ill Opinion of thy ſelf; but be aſſured, O my Soul, thou doſt not contemn thy ſelf ſo much as thou art contemptible. If thou contemn thy ſelf, thou makeſt a Merit of that Contempt, ſo as there is Pride affix'd to the Contempt thou haſt of thy ſelf. The other Vice, which is the Gluttony of the Soul, is no leſs dangerous. View thoſe Men that devour, that are continually laying violent hands on the Prey, and never ſay, *It is enough*; thoſe ambitious and covetous Perſons, who ſuck up the Subſtance of the Poor, who eat up

Gods People like bread, or who at leaſt labour with an unconceivable deſire to enrich and aggrandize themſelves; who go to ſeek the utmoſt bounds of the World, and yet put no end to their deſires, who can mount up to the higheſt pinacle of greatneſs, yet cannot fill the abyſs of their Ambition. Have a care, O my Soul, of running into theſe exceſſes, for he who hungers after Silver, will never be ſatisfied with Silver. Quench the fire of thy Avarice; for if thou furniſh it with food, thou wilt nouriſh it: it will devour thy entrails, and peradventure cauſe ſuch a Flame as will conſume both thee and thy Neighbours. I muſt not then neglect corporal faſting: but the principal one is Humility, that will guard me from the Drunkenneſs of Pride, and a contentment of Mind, that will make me deſpiſe ſuperfluous things, ſo as I ſhall be content with thoſe which are neceſſary. This is the true Sobriety of the Soul: theſe two vertues walk hand in hand together. Be thou humble, O my Soul, and thou wilt be content with thy Fortune: know how little thou art worth, and thou wilt be perſuaded thou haſt more than thou deſerveſt.

Prayer.

Prayer.

O *Lord, make me to know my ſelf, that I am nothing. It is certain that I am nothing: but yet I cannot confeſs it. My mouth ſays it, yet my heart doth not agree thereto: and I always feel within me the Devil of Pride, that ſollicites me, and ſays to me in a low Voice: ſenſeleſs as thou art, why ſpeakeſt thou of thy ſelf with ſo much ſcorn? If thou doſt not eſteem thy ſelf, who ſhall eſteem thee? Are men oblig'd to have a better Opinion of thee than thou haſt of thy ſelf; ſince thou muſt needs know thy ſelf better than they can know thee? if I humble my ſelf before thee, O Lord, it is, becauſe I look upon this as of no conſequence, by reaſon of the enormous diſproportion there is betwixt thee and me. But with men I keep to great meaſures, I try to deceive them, and to give them a vaſt Opinion of my ſelf: I ſtrive to keep up my rank, to be valued, and I can ſuffer no ſlight or contempt. O mercifull Jeſus, who didſt humble thy ſelf, even to death, inſpire thy Humility into me, and recover me from being overwhelmed with my Pride; ſo that being perſuaded I deſerve nothing, I may be evermore content with all thou beſtoweſt upon me; that Godlineſs and content of mind may be my great gain; ſo I have as much food and cloathing as is ſufficient.*

CHAP. XI.

Of the raſh Judgment which is made of Devout People.

I HAVE done with the Directions I thought neceſſary to help Devotion; but before I conclude, I believe there is ſome Conſolation due to truly Devout Perſons, of whom ſo bad a Judgment is made in the World. Some put them all into the rank of Hypocrites; Theſe are our falſe *Devoto's*, ſay the profane, who obſerve forms ſo exactly; who are careful to be at all pious Ordinances; who lend ſo great an attention to a Sermon; who pray and communicate with ſo many viſible marks of Devotion: we are never the leſs good Chriſtians for our little Affectation, we have what's ſolid in piety, and they the appearance only. It muſt be confeſt, Hypocriſie doth a great deal of harm to Devotion: I do not deny there are falſely devout People; there's hardly any veil, wherewith evil Conſciences cover themſeves more ordinarily than with this of Godlineſs. But becauſe ſome Hypocrites there be, is it neceſſary there are none others? Becauſe we find counterfeit Diamonds, can none find true and effective ones? becauſe there are falſe and fooliſh fires, is there then no true light? Some indeed believe they have found out a good remedy againſt this miſchief; they affect an apparent Indevotion: for having ſome zeal at the bottom they imagine 'tis neceſſary to affect a Way and an Air of indifference to avoid the Accuſation of Hypocriſie, but this is to avoid one evil by a greater: and being reduc'd to the neceſſity either of committing a Crime, or of being the occaſion of one, we are to determine on the latter. We are commanded to make the light of our good Works to ſhine before men, and to edifie our neigh-

neighbours by our good Examples. Unhappineſs therefore attends them, who put their Candle under a buſhel: but [to ſpeak the truth] I believe thoſe that ſo ſtrenuouſly endeavour to hide their Devotion, do not hide any great thing from us; they have little enough within. When a Chamber is fill'd with fire the light appears thorough the Windows; Piety is a fire that caſts its flame through all our vertues, tho never ſo much care be taken to conceal it. If the heart be full of godly zeal, it will appear upon the Tongue, in the Hands, and even in the Eyes. True, no affectation is to be us'd: God hates thoſe pompous and vain-glorious Pietics, which expoſe 'emſelves at the corners of Streets, and which wholly conſiſt in the liftings up of the hands, the rouling of the Eyes, and a wan and deadiſh Viſage: Devotions the more ſecret they are, the better: But how eaſie is it to diſtinguiſh Sincerity from affectation. If theſe prophane Judges did but know themſelves a little they would not confound a modeſt Piety and ſage Devotion, which ſhines only thorough the veil of a profound Humility, with a Devotion made up of Grimaces. The Life, Converſation and Manners are the beſt touch-ſtone to know the Sincerity of Devotion. If the devout Perſon is Covetous, Ambitious, one that grows rich at the expence of the Poor, or that is vindicative, I agree we may put ſuch an one in the rank of counterfeits. But if the Life, in all reſpects, be unreprovable, 'tis a Sin worthy of all the flames in Hell to judge that the Devotion is feign'd: 'tis a ſort of Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, like to that which the Phariſees were guilty of againſt our Saviour, in accuſing him that he did through the help of the Devil, what he did by the Finger and Spirit of God. Theſe prophane men do the ſame thing; to the evil ſpirit of Hypocriſie, they attribute the immediate works of God's Spirit. But ſay ſome, tho theſe ſame devouts appear regular in their Life, it's becauſe they ave the Addreſs, Dexterity and Knack

Knack not to diſcover their impurities: the love of their Reputation engaging 'em to uſe ſuch Precautions as hinder the publick from taking notice of their crimes. But is not this to violate all ſorts of Rights, to invade even thoſe of God himſelf, to undertake to ſee into the Heart? Is it not to violate the *aſylums* of Secreſie, to judge boldly of what doth not appear to the World? Is it not to goe againſt all the rules of good Senſe, to judge a man is wicked, becauſe he appears to be good. To conclude, I ſay, if we were to declare for the Hypocrite, or the prophane Libertine, the latter is to be baniſht rather than the former. The Hypocrite, at leaſt has the moity of a Chriſtian, tho he hath but the leaſt part: his Externals make to Edification, and his falſe Godlineſs may enkindle what is true. But the Libertine hath it neither within nor without: he offends God, ſcandalizes his Neighbour; he undoes others as well as himſelf. I ſhut up all then with counſelling our devout Perſon to affect nothing, yet to take heed of hiding his Devotion under the Veil of Indifference for the ſatisfaction of Libertines; to be an exact Frequenter of holy Aſſemblies; to hear with Attention; to pray with Ardour; not to diſpenſe himſelf from the external Actions of Humility, but without being exceſſively given to Appearances. After this, let him ſet himſelf above the Judgment of indevout People: God who ſees the ſincerity of his Heart will reward him, and puniſh thoſe raſh Judges moſt ſeverely.

Meditation.

WHat Extravagance is it to fear more the raſh Judgment of Men than the juſt Judgment of God! yet my own Heart reproaches me with this Sin. How oft

oft have I found my ſelf inclined to do Good, and yet have been ſtopt by a ſneaking Shame? I avoid making my ſelf remarkable for Singularity, and therefore generally I follow the Crowd. How oft have I been willing to ſpeak of good things and yet lent an ear to Converſations either vain or ſinful? I have not only lent 'em an ear, but I have mix'd my ſelf with them. How frequently have I met with prophane People, whoſe Words I deteſted, ſo full of Profaneneſs and Blaſphemy; yet I ſuffer'd and approv'd them by my Silence? How many times have I happened to condemn certain ſorts of Pleaſures intirely, and yet to ſuffer my ſelf to be ingaged in them, not daring to ſay No. *Oh, moſt pernicious Torrent of Cuſtom! who can have Strength enough to reſiſt thee? Wilt thou never be dried up? Never, till thou ſhalt have drawn in the children of* Eve *into that vaſt and perillous Sea, where even thoſe are ſcarce able to ſave themſelves who paſs over it upon the Wood of the* Croſs *of* Jeſus Chriſt. Alas! O my Soul, if thou follow the Crowd thou wilt periſh with it: though thou goeſt to Hell with Company thou wilt be never the leſs damn'd: the Society and Multitude of the Unhappy does

does not diminiſh their Pains: therefore hunt not after the Approbation and Praiſe of Men at the expence of thy own Salvation and Conſcience; 'tis too dear buying Wind and Smoak. What ſignifies it what Men think of thee, ſo God, who ſeeth thy Heart, judges well of thee? In this World, Sins carry their own Reward, and illuſtrious Vices are praiſed: but, comfort thy ſelf in the aſſurance, Another World will come, wherein every one will have his due. Then the raſh Judgments of Men will be null'd by the righteous Judgment of God. The Lord *Jeſus* Chriſt will confeſs thee before his Father and the Holy Angels; he will ſay to thee, Enter, thou good and faithful Servant, into the Joy of thy Lord. In the Preſence of Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, he will rebuke thoſe raſh People who are always violating that Commandment of Equity, *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* Seek then, O my Soul, ſeek to be approved of God: walk uprightly before him: be not a ſlave to Cuſtom: conform not thy ſelf to the Manners of this wicked World: think conſtantly on him in whoſe Sight thou walkeſt, and will be the Rewarder of thy Labours, and the Avenger of the Offences and Treſ-

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paſſes thou ſhalt commit. Keep thy ſelf from the Society of prophane People, that thou may'ſt not be infected with their Contagion; and ſince thou canſt not overcome their ill Habits by thy good Example, take heed, leſt their bad Example does not ſurmount thy good Habits of Virtue.

Prayer.

O *MY Bleſſed Redeemer, come to my help. The Stream carries me away; the Torrent hurries me. I do ſwim, I make endeavours, but am carried on, and engage my ſelf more and more in the flood of Corruption, which runs through the world. I condemn the vanity of Words and Actions, and ill Cuſtoms, which are at a diſtance from Chriſtian Modeſty, Simplicity, Sobriety, and Purity. Never theleſs I let my ſelf looſe to them. Take me by the right hand, O Lord Jeſus, conduct me by thy good Spirit in this rugged and difficult path. The World is a dangerous Sea; it is always beaten with Tempeſts, and no calm is ſeen there. It is full of Shelves and Rocks, famous for a prodigious number of Shipwracks. O Lord Jeſus, be thou my Pilot, be thou my North-ſtar in this perillous Navigation, that I may eſcape ſo many abyſſes, which continually open their gaping mouth upon me. Shine upon me in this dark ſome night, that I may not wander; and that leaving on one hand the paths ſo beaten and ſo frequented by Worldlings, I may walk in the High-Way, as forſaken and untrod, as I perceive it is; that I may walk in the Ways of Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, and Devotion, which thou haſt markt out to me; that by thoſe good roads I may advance perpetually in leaving the World and Sin behind me; that*

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I may preſs toward the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in thee: and that I may at laſt arrive at that bleſſed place; at that Haven where I ſhall be under Covert from all ſtorms; at that Haven where I ſhall ſee thy face in Righteouſneſs, where I ſhall be filled with thy Reſemblance, where I ſhall ſee thee without end, where I ſhall poſſeſs thee without ever being ſatisfied, and where I ſhall be happy to all Eternity.

THE END.